

Agritourism Market and Product Development Status Report

Prepared for
British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
&
Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture

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Table Of Contents

<i>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</i>	<i>i</i>
INTRODUCTION	i
PLANNING FOR AGRITOURISM'S BENEFITS	i
LESSONS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS	ii
BC'S AGRITOURISM SUPPLY	ii
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	iii
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES	iii
BRITISH COLUMBIA'S AGRITOURISM MARKETS	iv
BC Resident Tourists	iv
Non-BC Resident Tourists	iv
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT	vi
BC AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FRAMEWORK	vi
<i>Chapter 1</i>	<i>1</i>
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 CONCEPTS/DEFINITIONS	2
1.2 RATIONALE FOR AGRITOURISM	3
1.2.1 Agritourism Benefits	3
1.2.2 Agritourism Costs	4
1.3 AGRITOURISM IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS	5
1.3.1 Alberta	5
1.3.2 Saskatchewan	7
1.3.3 Manitoba	9
1.3.4 Ontario	10
1.3.5 Québec	15
1.3.6 New Brunswick	16
1.3.7 Nova Scotia	17
1.3.8 Newfoundland and Labrador	17
1.3.9 United States	18
1.3.10 Australia	26
1.3.11 Europe	27
1.4. AGRITOURISM LESSONS IN POLICY AND PROGRAMMING	29
<i>Chapter 2</i>	<i>31</i>
BC AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT SNAPSHOT	31
2.1 PAST AGRITOURISM SUPPLY CHARACTERISTICS	32
2.2 BC AGRITOURISM SUCCESS FACTORS	33
2.3 CURRENT AGRITOURISM SUPPLY CHARACTERISTICS	33
2.4 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	35
2.5 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES	35
2.6 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT BEST PRACTICES	36

<i>Chapter 3</i>	38
AGRITOURISM TRAVEL MARKET CHARACTERISTICS	38
3.1 BC RESIDENT AGRITOURISM MARKETS	38
3.1.1 Local/Regional Markets	38
3.1.2 Province-wide Resident Tourists	39
3.1.3 Resident Agritourist Socio-Demographics	39
3.2 NON-BC TOURISTS	41
3.2.1 Canadian Non-Residents	42
3.2.3 Overseas Visitors	44
3.2.4 Overall Non-BC Agritourism Market Profile	49
3.3 SPECIALTY AGRITOURISM MARKETS	50
3.3.1 Agri-Nursery/Garden Markets	50
3.3.2 Agri-Education.....	51
3.3.3 Agricultural Exchanges	51
3.3.4 General Interest/Training.....	51
<i>Chapter 4</i>	
MARKET DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT	52
4.1 MARKETING CHALLENGES	52
4.2 INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IN BC	52
4.2.1 Industry Support.....	52
4.2.2 Farmers' Markets	56
4.2.3 Tourism BC and Regional Tourism Associations	58
4.2.4 Community Tourism Associations/Chambers of Commerce.....	60
4.3 PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT	60
4.3.1 BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.....	61
4.3.2 Provincial Land Reserve Commission (LRC).....	63
4.3.3 Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture	64
4.4 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT	66
4.4.1 Canadian Rural Partnership Program	66
4.4.2 Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative (CARCI).....	66
4.4.3 Agricultural Value-Added Loan Program.....	66
4.4.4 Community Futures Development Corporation	67
4.4.5 Farm Improvement and Marketing Cooperatives Loans Act (FIMCLA)	67
<i>Chapter 5</i>	68
BC AGRITOURISM INDUSTRY CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES	68
5.1 AGRITOURISM INDUSTRY RECOGNITION	68
5.1.1 Recommended Strategy.....	68
5.2 SUPPORTIVE AGRITOURISM POLICIES AND REGULATIONS	69
5.2.1 Recommended Strategies	69
5.3 SUPPORTIVE AGRITOURISM FINANCING	70
5.3.1 Recommended Strategies	71
5.4 EFFECTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMS	75
5.4.1 Recommended Strategies	75
5.5 LIABILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS	76
5.5.1 Recommended Strategies	76

5.6 PRODUCT AND SERVICE QUALITY CONTROL.....	77
5.6.1 Recommended Strategies	77
5.7 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	78
5.7.1 Recommended Strategies	79
5.8 MARKETING PROGRAMS	80
5.8.1 Recommended Strategies	81
5.9 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS.....	83
5.9.1 Recommended Strategies	84
<i>Chapter 6</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>AGRITOURISM PUBLICATIONS.....</i>	<i>85</i>
6.1 STRATEGY RELATED INFORMATION SOURCES	85
6.1.1 Policy Information Sources	85
6.1.2 Financial Information Sources.....	85
6.1.3 Training Information Sources.....	86
6.1.4 Risk Management and Liability Protection Sources	86
6.1.5 Product and Service Quality Sources	87
6.1.6 Partnership Information Sources.....	88
6.1.7 Marketing Information Sources	88
6.1.8 Primary Agriculture Conflict Management Sources	89
6.2 ADDITIONAL AGRITOURISM REFERENCES	89
<i>Chapter 7</i>	<i>95</i>
<i>AGRITOURISM WEB NAVIGATION GUIDE</i>	<i>95</i>
7.1 THE CATALOGUE OF AGRICULTURAL AWARENESS INITIATIVES IN BC	95
7.2 ALBERTA MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ...	96
7.3 SMALL FARM CENTRE, DAVIS, CALIFORNIA.....	97
7.4 OTHER USEFUL AGRITOURISM WEBSITES	97
7.4.1 MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY TOURISM EXTENSION TEAM.....	97
7.4.2 ATTRA - APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FOR RURAL AREAS	98
7.4.3 ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTE (OATI).....	99
7.4.4 CANADIAN RURAL INFORMATION SERVICE	100
7.4.5 USDA FARM DIRECT MARKETING.....	100
7.4.6 THE FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION NETWORK FOR BC (FBMInet-BC). ..	101

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Driven by global trends associated with intensification, concentration and specialization, agricultural businesses and the activities associated with them have been evolving in British Columbia (BC). These changes have altered the form and practices of many of BC's agricultural industries and farming operations. BC farmers are looking beyond traditional farm enterprises to generate income via various forms of direct farm marketing and farm-based non-agriculture businesses. A form of secondary enterprise that offers much promise in adding value to a growing number of farm operations is agritourism. In this report, agritourism is defined as travel which combines agricultural or rural settings with products of agricultural operations - all within a tourism experience. It includes providing tourists with opportunities to experience a broad spectrum of agriculturally based products and services. These range from fruit and vegetable stand shopping to winery, orchard, and alpaca tours; from farm-based bed and breakfast accommodation to harvest festivals and tourist cattle drives.

BC's opportunities in agritourism have not yet been fully realised. To strategically guide BC's farm enterprises in capturing these opportunities, there is a need to combine current agritourism market and product information with an understanding of the developmental challenges associated with this form of agricultural diversification. The following report updates and builds on previous BC agritourism research conducted in 1997 (Opportunity Analysis for Farm-Based Businesses).

PLANNING FOR AGRITOURISM'S BENEFITS

While agritourism and other forms of related value-added processing are seen by both the farming community and government as diversification options for maintaining business viability in the agricultural sector, the potential benefits extend much further. There are advantages for farm operators, rural communities, and the tourism industry as a whole. Agritourism advantages for farm operators include:

- developing new consumer market niches;
- increasing awareness of local agricultural products;
- creating greater appreciation of the importance of maintaining agricultural land uses;
- providing farm family members with on-site employment opportunities; and
- strengthening the long term sustainability for farm businesses.

For rural communities and regions, agritourism can be a vehicle for diversifying and stabilising rural economies by:

- creating jobs and increasing community income;
- providing a broader market base for local businesses; and
- attracting other businesses and small industries.

From a tourism viewpoint, agritourism is a means of diversifying the mix of tourism products and services available to visitors and uniquely positioning rural regions and communities for tourism markets. Given these potential benefits as well as possible costs, it is imperative that the proponents of agritourism development take a proactive role in planning and managing the development of this form of diversification. There are important lessons to be learned from other jurisdictions and operations.

LESSONS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Experiences across Canada, the United States, Europe and Australia demonstrate that innovative policies and programs can be developed which encourage agritourism development. These practices include the development of:

- agricultural policies aimed specifically at strengthening the sustainability of agritourism;
- regional marketing programs which encourage tourists to experience farm products and services in rural regions; and
- development programs which build the capacity of farmers to create and professionally manage agritourism facilities and services.

Those initiatives point to the strategic importance of:

- co-ordinating and linking agricultural and tourism policies and programs;
- establishing supportive organizational structures and processes;
- promoting product quality and brand awareness;
- establishing flexible but high standards of operations and facility development;
- promoting local involvement and alliances;
- facilitating local product development and marketing; and
- creating policies reflective of the diverse character of agritourism operations and facilities.

BC'S AGRITOURISM SUPPLY

The BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries identifies 258 agritourism operations listed in existing agricultural and tourism marketing brochures and directories in 2000. While not necessarily a complete inventory, it provides some sense of the magnitude and range of such businesses in the province. The largest proportions of these operations were located in the Islands (33%), Thompson Okanagan (28%) and Vancouver (25%) tourism regions. The largest proportions of them were involved in the sale of various forms of fresh produce (40%) and wine products (24%). Several of the operations inventoried were also engaged in various forms of farm tours (18%), the sale of ranching experiences (14%), flowers and plants (12%), processed foods (11%), U-Pick activities (11%), bed and breakfast accommodation services (11%), as well as the distribution of fresh meats (10%).

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A wide array of innovative products and services can be added to the portfolio of BC's existing agritourism products and services. These include but are not limited to:

- building edu-tainment opportunities with schools;
- incorporating farm stores, farm stands and gift shops into farm direct marketing operations;
- conducting on-site festivals; and
- transforming portions of farm sites into destination travel areas.

Success in sustaining such operations is dependent on not only location factors (such as access to major travel routes and urban markets), but also managerial factors such as:

- the capacity of the farmer and farm operations to accommodate the demands of agritourism visitors;
- the farmer's advertising and marketing skills; and
- the farmer's financial commitment to agritourism product development and service delivery.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Several issues must be addressed before the full opportunity of BC's agritourism industry can be realised. These include the development of:

- marketing organizations with the resources and tourism products needed to encourage travellers to take agritourism holidays;
- product monitoring systems that encourage agritourism operators to develop high quality on-site attractions;
- travel packages which include regional tourism attractions and agritourism products;
- alliances between food producers and tourism operators highlighting niche cuisine products;
- product development and marketing training programs which will help farmers develop market ready products and services;
- relevant agritourism land use and programming regulations;
- effective risk management insurance programs; and
- tourism and business training programs for agritourism operators and employers.

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S AGRITOURISM MARKETS

Resident and non-resident markets comprise two of BC's major travel markets. Resident travellers are comprised of people living in BC and travelling for pleasure in the province. Non-resident travellers are comprised primarily of visitors from other Canadian provinces, the United States, Europe and the Asia Pacific region.

BC Resident Tourists

Residents of BC consistently account for the majority of tourist activity that occurs within the province. In 1999, they represented about 48% of BC's total overnight visitors (Tourism British Columbia (TBC) 2001a). In 2001, resident travel is expected to account for an estimated 10.9 million overnight person-trips. Agriculturally themed attractions and events capture a great deal of their visitors from BC travellers. However, only about 2.3% of resident travellers visited a farm or winery in 1995-96 (BCVS 1995-96).

Non-BC Resident Tourists

Travel to BC by non-residents is expected to generate about 53% of the overnight visitor volume and 74% of the overnight revenues to this province in 2001. US and Canadian (non-resident) segments are expected to generate about 45% of the overnight visits and 55% of the overnight revenues (BC 2000). In addition, other international overseas travellers are forecast to account for about 1.8 million overnight visitors which will represent 7.7% of the total overnight visitor volume and \$1.8 billion or 19% of the total overnight visitor revenues for the province. Non-BC Resident Tourists can be divided into smaller geographic segments: Canada, United States, and International.

Canadian Visitors

➤ Canadian Short Haul (CSH)

About 73% of all non-resident Canadians travelling to BC in 1999 were CSH travellers from Alberta. This represented about 1.7 million person trips to BC in that year (CTS 1999). When in BC, Albertan and other western Canada tourism needs are largely being met by trips to visit friends and relatives and visits to national or provincial parks. Little is known about their agritourism travel behaviour in BC.

➤ Canadian Long Haul (CLH)

The CLH market to British Columbia is primarily from Ontario and Quebec. These two provinces along with other destinations in the rest of Canada accounted for about 22% of all overnight person-trips to BC in 1999 (TBCa 2001). CLH travel to farms in BC appears to have some growth potential. Visitors from these CLH markets appear to be quite interested in visiting museums and historic sites, which could provide linkages with agriculturally-related museums and historic farms.

United States Visitors

In 1999, there were approximately 5.1 million overnight visitors to BC from the United States (TBCa 2001) - about 23% of the overnight visitor volume spent in the province. In 2001, BC is expected to capture about 25% of its non-resident market overnight visitor market from the United States. These American travellers will be either short or long haul visitors.

➤ United States Short-Haul (USSH)

The USSH market includes travellers from Washington, Idaho and Montana. A Northern Tier Study (1994) indicates that BC agritourism related products and services probably match best with the needs of "explorer" and "heritage" travel segments found in those states. Fourteen percent of the northern tier travelling population is explorers. Of this 14%, about 25% travel to western/northern Canada. Their interests include climbing, hiking, biking, camping and viewing wildlife and nature. The heritage segment accounts for 12% of the northern tier travelling population. Around 14% of this market travels to western/northern Canada. Their interests include historic sites, museums and art galleries, and local festivals and crafts.

➤ United States Long-Haul (USLH)

The USLH segment (primarily from Texas and California) accounts for a large share of overnight visits to BC. The most prominent activities undertaken by USLH tourists while in Canada include sightseeing, dining at restaurants, shopping, visiting a national or provincial park, viewing wildlife, walking and hiking.

Overseas Visitors

In 1999, overseas visitors represented about 7% of the total overnight visitor volume for BC (TBCa 2001). Approximately 8% of the total overnight trips and 19% of the total overnight revenues generated by non-residents for BC are expected to be derived from overseas visitors in 2001. Three of the largest sub-markets for BC from these regions are expected to be Japan (294,000 visitors), the United Kingdom (299,000 visitors) and Germany (155,000 visitors). Japan's travel market represents about a third of all expected Asia Pacific region arrivals in 2001. The United Kingdom's travellers are forecasted to generate around 43% of the total European overnight visitors in 2001. Germany (including Austria/Switzerland) is expected to account for about 22% of the total visitor volume coming from Europe to BC in 2001 (TBC 2001).

The potential interest and likelihood of participation in Canadian rural travel (which may involve visits to agritourism attractions and events) is most pronounced in Japan, followed by the United Kingdom and then Germany. Amongst Japanese travellers interested in rural travel, about 62 % of them were interested and likely to visit Canada during the period 1995-2000. Rural travel market interest levels amongst United Kingdom and German tourists likely to visit Canada were 62% and 30% respectively.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The agritourism industry must develop stronger alliances between BC's agriculture and tourism industries, as well as with government organizations if it is to successfully address its challenges to growth. Several industry and government organizations provide the foundation on which future alliances can be built. These industry organizations include: Direct Farm Marketing Associations, Farmers' Markets, Agricultural Commodity Group Associations, Tourism BC and Regional Tourism Associations; and Community Tourism Associations/Chambers of Commerce. Government institutions providing support include: the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries; Provincial Land Reserve Commission; and the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture); as well as a range of federal government programs.

BC AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The full potential for agritourism can only be achieved if solutions to the industry's development challenges are found. To strategically guide future efforts which address these challenges, a Provincial Agritourism Council (PAC) should be established. Its mandate should be to facilitate strategic product development, marketing and training initiatives for all agritourism operations in BC. The PAC should be comprised of a combination of industry stakeholders including government and private sector organizations with long-term interests in the development of a sustainable agritourism sector in BC. The PAC should be funded by a combination of public funds matched with industry financial resources derived from direct and indirect recipients of agritourism's benefits. The PAC should use these resources to undertake a series of strategic initiatives. In combination, these initiatives should provide the structure for an agritourism development strategy framework for British Columbia. The recommended strategies for the PAC include:

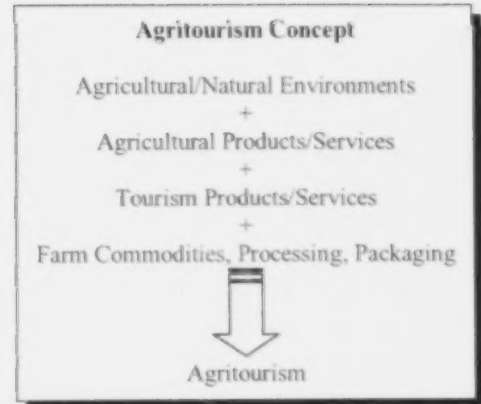
- Addressing challenges related to the interpretation and implementation of government policies and regulations influencing the development of agritourism. The main aim of the PAC should be to reduce the "red tape" associated with the interpretation and implementation of existing regulations and policies affecting agritourism development.
- Assisting the industry in its efforts to obtain financial support for the development of agritourism and value-added processing businesses. The main focus of this assistance should be on educating farm operators about various existing loan programs and the procedures required for applying for support from such programs.
- Establishing and implementing training programs associated with such issues as hiring employees, providing quality customer service, developing effective business plans and marketing.
- Conducting meetings and workshops which increase awareness of the benefits of risk management programs and the steps required to ensure safe tourist visits to agritourism sites.

- Encouraging agritourism businesses to adopt credible quality standards programs for agritourism products and services. These standards should not only guide general business practices, but also practices related to customer service and products sold.
- Encouraging the development of strategic partnerships between agritourism and value-added processing businesses, as well as other related enterprises. The PAC should lead in bringing tourism businesses and agritourism operators into mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Promoting a province-wide agritourism image and associated marketing program that will stimulate market growth.



Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

Driven by global trends associated with intensification, concentration and specialization, agricultural businesses and the activities associated with them have been evolving in British Columbia (BC). Over the past four decades these changes have dramatically altered the form and practices of BC's agricultural industries and farming operations. More than ever before, BC farmers are aggressively applying their resourcefulness and determination to meet the demands of a changing marketplace. No longer satisfied to sell only traditional crops and livestock, farmers have become marketing and production entrepreneurs looking beyond traditional farm enterprises to generate income via various forms of direct farm marketing, and farm-based non-agriculture businesses. A form of secondary enterprise which offers much promise in adding value to farm operations is agritourism. Agritourism combines rural and natural settings with products of agricultural operations within tourism experiences. It is considered a component of rural tourism.



In some regions of North America and Europe agritourism is well developed and attracts a large client base. For example, BC's floral gardens attract visitors from around the world. In other Canadian and U.S. regions, such as Ontario and Oregon, farming communities have organized and are well on their way to realising the benefits from diversification into agritourism. More and more BC farm operations are offering agritourism services (e.g. Okanagan wineries) and are seeking ways to expand further. Other operations are just starting up and are exploring agritourism options for business expansion.

The British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, as well as the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture recognise the benefits to be gained from agritourism. The diversification of farm operations into agritourism can bring significant opportunities for enhancing the sustainability of many farm operations. For agritourism ventures the demand for travel experiences in rural settings is increasing and the marketplace is interested in learning more about agricultural landscapes. At the same time these Ministries appreciate that diversification into agritourism businesses is not a simple task. Such adjustments call for a clear understanding of market opportunities and effective communication of the best options for product development and management.

British Columbia's potential opportunities in agritourism have not yet been fully realised. Agricultural businesses and their support agencies need to identify market and product development opportunities. This information, combined with an understanding of where the agritourism industry is today in terms of developmental and management challenges, is needed in order to strategically guide BC's agricultural enterprises into this form of business diversification.

1.1 CONCEPTS/DEFINITIONS

Agritourism represents a significant component of rural tourism. Terms used to refer to the concept of agritourism include agricultural tourism, farm tourism, farm vacation tourism, wine tourism, and agri-entertainment. Generally, these terms are associated with small-scale farm enterprises and community events that are linked to local families and the agricultural traditions of rural regions.

Rural tourism can be defined as the 'country experience', which encompasses a wide range of attractions and activities that take place in agricultural or rural areas. Its essential characteristics include open spaces, low levels of tourism development, and opportunities for visitors to directly experience agricultural and rural/or natural environments

Case Study: Agri-entertainment

Some farms with fruit and vegetable stands, and/or pick-your-own produce have incorporated agri-entertainment into their operations. Agri-entertainment can take many forms: festivals, hayrides, petting zoos, seasonal events, and contests are some ways to engage visitors. Other entertainment programs include: Easter egg hunts, perennial plant tours, Halloween events, pancake breakfasts, moonlight pumpkin-picking parties, and annual farm fests.

(<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/pickyour.html>)

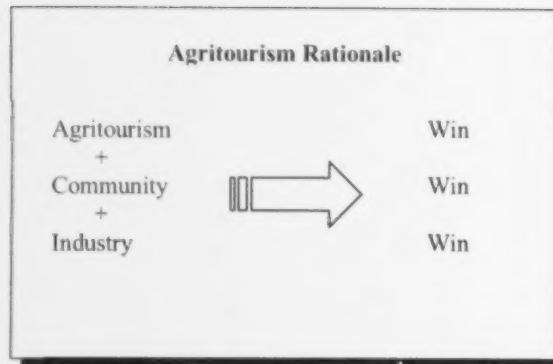
This report defines agritourism as travel which combines agricultural or rural settings with products of agricultural operations – all within a tourism experience. It includes providing tourists with opportunities to experience a broad spectrum of agriculturally based products and services ranging from fruit and vegetable stand shopping to winery, orchard, and alpaca tours, from farm-based bed and breakfast accommodation, to tourist participation in harvest festivals and cattle drives.

It is difficult to discuss agritourism without referring to value-added processing. Value-added processing involves taking basic farm commodities and processing them into higher value consumer products. This includes a spectrum of on-farm products ranging from bagged lettuce or dried tomatoes to jams, jellies and llama sweaters. In some situations, valued-added processing can be a form of agritourism. For example, many wineries in BC are now providing tourists with opportunities to visit their vineyards, explore their wine cellars, and taste their wines prior to making on-site purchases of winery products (e.g. wines, jams, foods, crafts, etc.). In these cases, the farmer's agricultural resources have been "packaged" in ways which are capable of motivating travellers to visit and purchase on-site farm products and services as part of their tourism experience.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR AGRITOURISM

Agritourism has become a diversification option for many farm operators because of two primary reasons. First, cost/price pressures and associated crises in agricultural overproduction have forced farmers to augment their income through diversification both within agriculture itself as well as through the adoption of non-agricultural pursuits. Secondly, increasing discretionary incomes and demand for more specialized forms of vacation experiences have stimulated growth for tourism and recreational activity in rural environments. Specific interest in agritourism comes from the desire of

predominantly urban populations to experience the rural environments and nostalgia associated with a working farm enterprise. Travellers are seeking such destinations for many reasons including: a desire for peace and tranquillity; interest in rural and natural environments; escape from more overcrowded centres; inexpensive rural recreation; and curiosity about the farming industry and lifestyle (Government of Manitoba 2000). These drivers, in combination with better access to rural areas, and an expanding desire to experience rural and wilderness areas, have made agritourism a popular development for a growing number of BC farmers, rural regions and communities, and the tourism industry.



1.2.1 Agritourism Benefits

Both the farming community and government see agritourism and other forms of related value-added processing as diversification options for maintaining business viability in the BC agricultural sector. However, the potential advantages of agritourism development extend much further. They can be linked to the individual farmer, the local community, and the region as a whole.

From an agricultural industry perspective, agritourism is perceived to be a means of:

- expanding farm operations;
- using farm based products in new and innovative ways;
- improving farm revenue streams;
- developing new consumer market niches;
- increasing awareness of local agricultural products;
- increasing appreciation of the importance of maintaining agricultural land uses;
- channelling additional on-farm revenues directly to family members who might otherwise have to work off the farm;
- giving a stimulus to upgrade farm living and working areas, as well as leisure facilities;
- providing opportunities to acquire managerial skill and entrepreneurial spirit; and
- increasing the long term sustainability for farm businesses.

For rural communities and regions, agritourism can be a vehicle for:

- generating additional direct revenue for local businesses and services from tourists using community resources during their agritourism travels;
- stimulating the upgrade and revitalisation of local facilities and community appearance for visitors;
- increasing the value associated with sound environmental management of the rural landscape;
- helping to preserve and develop local traditions, art and craft;
- encouraging farmers to continue farming despite increasingly competitive markets;
- promoting inter-regional, inter-cultural communication and understanding;
- increasing awareness and education of agricultural issues among the public;
- promoting the on-going use of local agricultural products and services;.
- helping diversify and stabilize the rural economy, by creating jobs and increasing family and community income;
- providing a broader business base for the community and creating an opportunity for attracting other businesses and small industries. (Dernoi 1991, Gannon 1994, Weaver and Fennell 1997).

From a tourism viewpoint, agritourism can be a means of:

- diversifying the mix of tourism products and services available to visitors;
- increasing tourism flows into rural and under-utilised but attractive destination regions;
- increasing the length of season for tourism operators in rural regions;
- uniquely positioning rural regions and communities for tourism markets; and
- bringing more foreign currency to local businesses.

1.2.2 Agritourism Costs

While there are numerous potential advantages to becoming involved in agritourism, the industry is not without its potential risks and associated costs. Some of the more frequently mentioned challenges relate to the possibility of:

- incurring unforeseen or prohibitive developmental and marketing costs for the operator and community;
- placing unforeseen and excessive demand on farm and community services and activities;
- providing only part-time and seasonal employment opportunities;
- creating unforeseen environmental and social impacts outside direct community control; and
- increasing the cost of living for community residents and farmers because of inflated property, goods and service costs.

Proponents of agritourism development in BC should take an active role in planning and managing the development of this form of diversification. There are important lessons to be learned from other jurisdictions and operations. The following section of this report describes some of these best practice examples.

1.3 AGRITOURISM IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

In Canada, the United States, Europe, and Australia, agritourism has emerged as a growing component of both agriculture and tourism. The following sections describe initiatives which may be of use to British Columbia as it develops its agritourism industry.

1.3.1 Alberta

Currently there are over 200 farm-based agritourism businesses in Alberta. In addition there are approximately 120 approved Farmers' Markets and over 160 market gardeners and fruit growers in operation around the province. The agritourism product portfolio includes farmers' markets; farm and garden retail centres; various forms of accommodation (e.g. bed and breakfasts, cabins and cottages, campsites and RV parks); farm gate markets (e.g. flowers, plants meat, dairy products, and processed foods); U-Pick centers; on-farm recreation activities (e.g. hunting, fishing, riding, nature observation, dancing); crafts retailing (e.g. local woodworking); events (horse shows, workshops); and farm tours.

Policy Directives

The Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Department coordinates agritourism development. The Department is involved in several agritourism development and promotion initiatives. Their Website (<http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/general/agritour.nsf>) offers many resources to operators.

Alberta does not currently have legislation or policy that is specifically targeted at agritourism. However it does have regulations regarding signage, accommodation, food preparation, etc., that relate to agritourism activities (e.g., Country Vacation Enterprise - http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/mgmt/diversification/index_agtour.html). While no official agritourism policies exist, the Department anticipates having clear policy direction within the year. Staff are now concentrating on guiding the industry through its infancy stages by providing resource development and education support, as well as linkages with other government departments and provinces. Most of its initiatives in this regard are communicated via its website at <http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/general/agritour.nsf>.

Product and Market Development Initiatives

Marketing support for these operations is provided in a variety of direct and indirect ways. Direct marketing support is available from the Department of Agriculture. In particular it supports the Alberta Agritourism Directory on the Web. The website (<http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/general/agritour.nsf>) promotes the majority of agritourism operations in Alberta. The website also provides additional links to other related agritourism opportunities around the province. These include:

- farmer's markets;
- agricultural fairs and exhibitions;
- the Alberta Country Vacation Association (<http://albertacountryvacation.com/>) which lists farms and ranch vacations in central and southern Alberta;
- museums and heritage sites (<http://www.gov.ab.ca/mcd/mhs/mhs.htm>);

- Cowboy Trails (<http://www.thecowboytrail.com/>); and
- a vacation planner associated with Travel Alberta (<http://www.travelalberta.com/>).

The directory is a partnership roster, which can be used by agritourism business owners to search out other operators with whom they may wish to work for product packaging and marketing purposes. It also can be used by tour companies to determine what is available for the development of new agricultural tours.

In support of agricultural diversification initiatives, the Department of Agriculture has also developed and disseminated resource materials for use by agritourism and value-added processing operators. Readily available by internet access (<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/mgmt/diversification/>), these resources address agritourism issues related to food and rural development, alternative livestock, direct marketing, business strategy and planning, financing, and sources of information for small business.

In addition, the Department is sponsoring/facilitating several workshops/seminars designed to build stronger marketing skills amongst agritourism operators. Topics in these seminars include:

- Marketing Your Agritourism Venture Workshop Series;
- Setting Up Accommodations on the Farm;
- From Direct Sales to Retail;
- Finding New Markets for Your Meat Products;
- Foundations of Product Development and Product Costing;
- Explore Food Service: New options for heritage berries; and
- Price it Right.

Case Study: "The Cowboy Trail"

In response to low budgets, growing competition and limited market penetration, a group of farmers, tourism operators and rural communities developed a strategic alliance to create a unique market position for their combined tourism products and services. Their combined tourism experience was comprised of an inspiring Alberta foothills landscape, a range of diverse western activities and events, several rural towns with unique shopping experiences, access to varying local cultural attractions, and four major western-themed tourism attractions. These elements were all linked together by "The Cowboy Trail"- a rural Alberta highway corridor.

By combining their efforts, the partners in the alliance were able to: access additional financial support for their activities from the Calgary and Area Tourism Region Association; produce and distribute 30,000 copies of "The Cowboy Trail" brochure to travellers; promote "The Cowboy Trail" at the Calgary Stampede; and generate free media attention for the area. Future plans for the "The Cowboy Trail" include expanding the range of corporate partners in the alliance; creating three travel packages for marketing to tour companies and individual tourists; and building a tour website for the alliance. In addition, the alliance is planning a monitoring program that will assess the performance of "The Cowboy Trail" from market awareness, visitation and sales revenue perspectives.

(http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/mgmt/diversification/index_news.html)

Other Supporting Initiatives

Developmental and marketing support for agritourism in the province is provided by the Alberta Tourism Development Branch (<http://www.alberta-canada.com/tdb/>). The mandate of this organization is to assist and facilitate the growth and expansion of marketable tourism facilities and attractions in Alberta that generate increased visitor sales to and within the province.

An example of a program which indirectly supports agritourism is TourismTogether (<http://www.tourismtogether.com/>). This program provides information on product development, marketing, planning and communications strategies related to tourism. It is a tool for small to large tourism operators attempting to keep current with recent innovations and programs affecting tourism suppliers in Alberta. It provides businesses with opportunities and partnerships regardless of size or location.

A variety of agritourism capacity building programs have been recently implemented. These have include conferences such as:

- *Growing Rural Tourism - a Rural Tourism Conference - An Innovative, Community-Based Approach* (<http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/general/brkgnews.nsf>). Sponsored by the Camrose Regional Exhibition, Alberta Economic Development, Travel Alberta, and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, this conference provided attendees with a series of hands-on workshops designed to help rural operators develop tourism opportunities.
- *Explore Direct Conference*
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development specialists and the Alberta Farmers' Market Association sponsored this conference. It brought together farm direct marketing specialists from across the continent to help operators strengthen marketing skills, explore product development options, and expand networks. Subjects discussed at this conference included: designing and delivering farm tours, risk management, e-marketing, marketing promotion, marketing alliance building, and product imaging and branding.
- *Alberta Market Gardeners' Association*
In addition to government programs, the Alberta Market Gardeners' Association is producing information and publications of use to agritourism operators in their activities. These include: Find a Grower: Maps to Members; Seasons of Availability for produce from Alberta's Market Gardeners; Tips & FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions) for visiting U-Pick gardens; Recipes using fresh picked produce; and references to other related information sources (e.g. weather, farmers markets).

1.3.2 Saskatchewan

Agriculture is at the centre of the province's heritage and economy with roughly 60,000 farms and ranches. The development of agritourism products represents a development approach which is consistent with Saskatchewan's heritage and with the growing interest in rural and country-style vacations. The current product mix includes fixed attractions (historic farms and agricultural heritage museums), events (agricultural conferences/conventions, rodeos, fairs and exhibitions, historic events) and services (accommodation, catering and tour operations).

Policy Directives

Tourism Saskatchewan has identified agritourism as one of its strategic themes for focus and development in the province's tourism sector (J. Kent Stewart et al., 2000). The key partners in developing Saskatchewan's agritourism strategy are the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Saskatchewan Economic Development and Tourism Saskatchewan. A 1997 Saskatchewan rural operator survey identified several barriers related to agritourism development. The largest barrier was related to unnecessary, complex, or contradictory regulations (Weaver and Fennel 1997). Initial efforts are being made to address these barriers and encourage partnerships and programs that promote partnerships between the agricultural and tourism industries.

Product and Market Development Initiatives

To help develop the "Agritourism Toolkits" of Saskatchewan farmers, the province's Ministry of Agriculture and Food has offered one-day workshops to farmers and operators. These workshops helped identify those elements which constituted agritourism products, as well as methods of creating public awareness and investment opportunities related to the development of this sector. .

Case Study: Building Agritourism Partnerships

The owners of a bed and breakfast in rural Saskatchewan have a passion for horses. They have partnered their agritourism accommodation with suppliers of trail rides, sleigh rides and other horse-related activities to create a unique tourism package for visitors to their establishment. Another Saskatchewan rural bed-and-breakfast host has positioned his establishment as a spa retreat through an informal partnership with a local spa facility.

(<http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/DOCS/reports/ffreport/ffr0104.asp>)

An integral component of Saskatchewan's agritourism product mix is bed and breakfast accommodation. Central to marketing such accommodation facilities is the Saskatchewan Country Vacation Association (SCVA). In its ongoing efforts to promote the operations in a credible fashion, the Association has developed a logo for display at a member's facilities. It designates that the facilities have met SCVA accreditation standards. The most successful operations offer more than just bed and breakfast services. These additional attractions help entice guests to stay longer.

While agritourism in Saskatchewan has limited market recognition, several strategies and tactics are being considered to address this situation. These include:

- developing an agritourism "product club" that can be linked with other related agritourism operations across the region (e.g., Pan-Prairie Agritourism Product Club) and Canada;
- sponsoring conferences to validate agritourism as a growth sector and to create provincial momentum for its development;
- developing databases for promotion and marketing of agritourism products;
- introducing multi-generational agritourism products for grandparents and grand-children;
- creating farm-based immersion travel programs;
- increasing the scope and number of agri-related festivals;
- promoting hunting/fishing opportunities with bed and breakfast and country vacation destinations;

- partnering with local marketing associations;
- partnering with other international agricultural marketing initiatives; and
- partnering with destination event planning organizations (Anderson/Fast and Associates 1998).

1.3.3 Manitoba

About eighty-six "farm vacation" operations exist in Manitoba. These are primarily located within 100 miles of the province's southern border, in relatively close proximity to American markets. Located on properties of varying size, the number of guest beds per establishment range from 4 to 34 beds. The most frequent activities provided by these establishments include: wildlife viewing (e.g. birds, deer, elk and moose), learning about farm lifestyles and society, hunting and photography. Most agritourism activity occurs during the summer/fall season, with winter activity limited to a few operators offering activities such as snowmobiling, wildlife viewing and dinner parties. Revenues generated by agritourism activities are estimated to range between a few hundred dollars to over \$30,000 per property. The annual median revenue is estimated to be less than \$5,000.00. The most significant fixed attractions associated with agritourism are the province's Crop Demonstration Centre, west of Winnipeg and the Manitoba Agricultural Museum at Austin.

Policy/Directives

In 1998–1999, the Government of Manitoba's Department of Agriculture formally focused their attention on agritourism development. In its Expenditure Estimates, the Marketing and Farm Business Management Branch assumed responsibility for providing direction and support services to communities developing agritourism enterprises that provided additional income to farmers.

The government also created a Provincial Agritourism Committee comprised of representatives from industry, agencies and government departments. It was chaired by an "Agri-venture Specialist". This Committee has facilitated regional workshops, developed a self-training resource binder and conducted community meetings aimed at developing co-operative agritourism networks. It has also developed a promotional display "Serving a Slice of Farm Life".

Product and Market Development Initiatives

The Ministry of Agriculture has also produced a brochure entitled *Agritourism: On-Farm Diversification*. It provides information for farmers considering diversification into agritourism. As well, the Ministry maintains the *Agriculture and Food Ventures in Manitoba 2000-2001 Directory*. It contains a dozen agritourism related listings as well as information concerning a variety of other rural enterprises.

(<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/financial/agribus/ccf01s01.html>).

(<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/financial/foodventures/agritourism.html>).

The Ministry has also conducted an "Agritourism and Alternate Crop of the Future" tour and a Bed and Breakfast seminar related to marketing, value-added and diversification. Based on information emanating from these events, professional home economists have worked with local economic development boards and farm families to develop the South Central Agritourism and Central Plains brochure. The area's "Mid-Land Agritourism" brochure was revised and now features 26 agritourism sites. (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/programs/pdf/5cCentralRegion.pdf>).

From a tourism marketing perspective, the province's *Manitoba Vacation Planner* includes a range of agritourism products associated with cultural heritage themes. For example, Steinback's Mennonite Heritage Village and Dauphin's Ukrainian Heritage Village are two high-profile attractions which spotlight not only agricultural, but also cultural and homesteader themes. In addition, several farm and ranch operators provide full descriptions of their operations in this *Vacation Planner* directory.

Other Supporting Initiatives

Other programs supporting agritourism development in Manitoba include:

➤ ***The Canadian Rural Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) Fund***

In 1998 the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council (MRAC) awarded more than \$1.1 million in funding for agricultural initiatives designed to increase income-generating opportunities for rural Manitobans. MRAC, a not-for-profit organization, manages this federal Canadian Rural Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) fund. It has earmarked research and development funds for projects that foster increased long-term growth, self-reliance, employment and competitiveness for Manitoba's agri-food sector and rural communities. Examples of eligible projects include agritourism, new product advancement, assistance in business plan development, feasibility studies and marketing initiatives.

➤ ***Manitoba Agri-Ventures Initiatives (MAVI)***

This government program is designed to strengthen agriculture in Manitoba by encouraging the development of the value-added agri-food sector. Some of its value-added projects are related to agritourism. (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/financial/agribus/cch03s01.html>).

➤ ***Country Roads Agri-Tourism Product Club***

This Canadian Tourism Product Club project is developing an agritourism product inventory to identify the market readiness of the existing agritourism products in the province. Once the Manitoba inventory is complete, an inventory of Saskatchewan and Alberta agritourism products and services will be compiled. Currently about 310 operators belong to the Club.

1.3.4 Ontario

A wide and innovative set of agritourism products and services is available to travellers in Ontario. Compared to other regions in Canada, Ontario's agritourism products and services appear to be more developed, wide-ranging and coordinated in their management and marketing. Innovative products and services available include a variety of guided agri-tours such as walking tours, visits to museums, restaurants, and venues related to the production of agricultural produce (e.g. yarn and cheese factories, pork shops, as well as farms featuring emus, goats, elk, horses and dairy cows). Many of the tours are themed around subjects such as gardening and horticulture or farm animals (e.g. sheep, emus, goats, etc.). Cuisine featuring local products is also an emerging theme in many agritourism operations. As an example, several grower-guided tours of Niagara's unique food and wine bounty are available for corporate, conference and special interest groups.

Ontario has been particularly effective in building themed tourism routes based on alliances between tourism communities and agricultural operators. These routes include:

➤ *The Apple Route*

The Apple Route is a themed 64 kilometre travel route in eastern Ontario. Its major attraction is a massive man-made feature called The Big Apple. The Apple Route's Historical Guide highlights the agriculture, retail, natural and cultural attractions along the route.

➤ *Get Out of Town Tour Program*

In many Ontario counties, partnerships have been forged between tourism and agriculture organizations. For instance, several organizations have allied to develop agri-tour or harvest weekends. Stratford's *Get Out of Town* offers groups of festival patrons opportunities to spend a day visiting farms and participating in a country-style luncheon served in a rural church basement. These weekend tours are scheduled to avoid the heavy work schedules of farmers, particularly during the peak farming periods.

➤ *Huron Harvest Trail*

The *Huron Harvest Trail* and *Explore Ontario's West Coast* programs have been developed by Huron County agriculture and tourism groups to highlight this agricultural area. Promoters of the Huron Harvest Trail invite visitors to "graze their way" through its 75 sites. Travellers are encouraged to explore villages and country lanes, as well as discover farm-gate markets featuring fresh produce, country butchers, bakeries and unique farm adventures. Locally produced crafts, bed and breakfasts, country inns, lakeside resorts and farm vacations are all packaged into the Trail's product mix.

➤ *Niagara Agritourism*

Ontario's Niagara region has led Canada in the development of forms of agritourism especially related to the area's grape and fruit growing industries. It has done this by combining the resources of the wine, cultural tourism and, most recently, food industries into innovative agritourism themed packages. Creative agritourism products include:

- A "Just Can It" program offering individuals, service clubs, church groups and entrepreneurs opportunities to create preserves in a fully-equipped food processing kitchen. With the motto being "Savour Niagara ... One Bite At A Time," the program aims to assist local growers and processors of speciality foods in developing and marketing local products.
- A *Wine Country Cooking School* with a "participation kitchen" (16 students capacity) that emphasises "great-tasting, straightforward recipes that work - using fresh, local, seasonal ingredients with an eye to matching food and wine."
- A Niagara Peninsula Agri-Tours website (www.npat.com) that promotes authentic agri-touring and regional cuisine experiences for a growing number of visitors to Ontario's Niagara Peninsula.

Policy/Directives

To stimulate the growth of agritourism, the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation developed a Rural Visitation Program in 1993. This program was designed to encourage farm diversification using a community development approach. It involved a combination of Community Futures; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food Extension; County Planning and Development; Municipal; and Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation initiatives. Since the inception of that program, agritourism and other forms of agricultural diversification in Ontario have been supported by several public and/or private sector initiatives.

What has typified many regional and local agricultural policies in Ontario has been the government's interest in enabling the growth of the agritourism industry. To facilitate the continued development of high quality agritourism experiences, the province has regularly reviewed and refined policies influencing the industry.

For instance, in the Niagara Region, where a significant amount of agritourism development occurs, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, the Town of Lincoln and the City of St. Catharines have recently reviewed their policies on agritourism and wineries. Three highlights emerging from the review that have implications for BC agritourism development are:

- the growing importance of agricultural activities as the primary use of the property;
- the expanding importance of building close linkages between agritourism on farm lands and the involvement of local communities; and
- the need for a consistent approach to agritourism development across agricultural regions so as to ensure development is compatible with objectives of the area's regional plan and existing farm operations (<http://www.regional.niagara.on.ca/departments/Planning/happen/>).

Product and Market Development Initiatives

Numerous programs have been implemented to support the marketing of agritourism in Ontario. Particularly significant in this regard are:

➤ Farmers' Markets Ontario

Farmers' Markets Ontario was established in 1991 to assist local community groups and farmers develop farm markets. Since its inception, farmers' market operations in the province have expanded from about 25 in 1991 to more than 150 in 2001. These markets draw primarily (85-90%) local and regional clientele. They are particularly valuable in: adding vitality and animation to community life; generating additional revenues for local businesses; creating incubation centres for new farm products; and building new market niches for direct farm marketers (<http://www.fmo.reach.net/>).

Farmer's Markets Ontario also provides assistance to its members via information presentations, needs assessment workshops, planning and marketing consultations, as well as technical publications and audio-visual materials. In 1998, Farmer's Markets Ontario, the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Council and 19 Farmer's Markets financed a study to measure the economic impact of Farmer's Markets. Research focused on collecting economic impact information from customers, vendors, local business owners and market managers. The farmer's markets had an estimated overall economic impact of nearly \$1.5 billion in Ontario in 1998 (<http://www.oac.uoguelph.ca/SRPD/projects.html#SRC>).

➤ *Ontario Rural Routes*

Formed in 1998, Ontario Rural Routes creates web pages for small agritourism and ecotourism businesses in rural communities and areas. The website also links to other national and international rural tourism ventures. The Rural Routes website lists over 1000 operators. For a small fee (\$60), participating businesses receive a web page on the Rural Routes site. These web pages then become part of a searchable Rural Routes database that includes customized maps to the sites. The Rural Routes web pages also have a "self-edit" feature, which allows subscribing businesses to update their own web pages (e.g. images, programs, etc.) from any Internet terminal (<http://www.ruralroutes.com/>). The impetus for the Ontario Rural Routes website's development came from the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association, whose 180 members wanted to establish a presence on the world wide web.

➤ *Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association*

Since 1973 the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association has encouraged direct farm sales activities amongst its members through a wide variety of educational and promotional programs. The Association's membership ranges from 185 to 200 members annually. The vast majority of the members are farmers pursuing roadside marketing and 'pick your own' agricultural business ventures. About 10% of the members are non-farm associates who provide services to the farming community. Ontario Farm Fresh is a valuable non-government catalyst for several awareness building programs related to direct farm sales (email: info@ontariofarmfresh.com).

Other Supporting Initiatives

To support the development of agritourism Ontario has developed a variety of targeted support programs. These include:

➤ *Rural Job Strategy Fund*

The Rural Job Strategy Fund (RJSF) was a three-year, \$30-million investment program, created in 1997. Its aim was to encourage partnerships that enhanced: the quality of Ontario products; marketing and export opportunities; and the adoption of new or upgraded information technologies. Approximately \$163 million has been invested by the public and private sectors through RJSF. These funds were allocated to 192 projects, which were expected to create approximately 10,000 jobs (<http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/rural/jobstrat/rjs.html>).

Case Study: Country Inns

Ontario will invest \$825,000 over a three-year period to help country inns boost rural tourism and local economies (August 2000). The initiative involves a partnership between the Innkeepers of Ontario (represented by the Millcroft Inn and the Benmiller Inn), Sleeman Brewing & Malting Company Ltd., the VQA Group of Wineries (In Trust with the Ontario Hostelry Institute), Toronto Life Magazine and Laura Secord.

➤ *Healthy Futures for Ontario Agriculture*

A four-year, \$90 million Healthy Futures for Ontario Agriculture program was launched in 1999. It is aimed at maintaining and building on the success of Ontario's agri-food industry. Replacing the previously mentioned Rural Job Strategy Fund Program, this initiative was developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in co-operation with the province's agri-food industry. Government funding for participants in this program is available for up to 50 per cent of total project costs. The goals of the program are to: 1) enhance the safety and quality of Ontario food products, 2) capitalize on marketing and export opportunities, and 3) improve the quality and efficient use of rural water resources. Components of this program potentially eligible to agritourism operators include:

- *Field to Fork Food Safety and Quality* projects offering access to technical expertise which assists the agri-food sector in maintaining and expanding its capacity to meet domestic and export market demands with regard to food safety and quality; and
- *Healthy Futures Innovation* projects involving applied research, new product development, expanded market access and the creation or adoption of technologies, practices and processes that enhance food safety and water quality
<http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/infores/hfoa/index.html>.

➤ *The Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC)*

The Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC) is a coalition of 47 agricultural, agri-food and rural organizations. Incorporated in 1996, its purpose is to administer Ontario's share of the federal Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) Fund. AAC invests in innovative projects that build the economic health of Ontario's agriculture and agri-food sectors as well as rural communities. Support is tailored to the needs of the project and can include grants, loan guarantees, loans, interest rebates and even equity positions in start-up companies. By the fall of 2000, AAC's CanAdapt program had committed more than \$45 million to 279 projects valued at approximately \$215 million. In July 19, 2000, there were commitments for 109 marketing projects, totalling \$6,669,734 million in grants (<http://www.adaptcouncil.org/index.html>).

➤ *OATI (Ontario Agricultural Training Institute)*

OATI (Ontario Agricultural Training Institute) is a not-for-profit corporation that provides training services to the agricultural industry. It was established in 1989 in cooperation with public, private, and non-profit sectors of the agricultural industry. Its mandate is to strengthen rural communities by providing superior, specialized, accessible training and development opportunities. OATI also functions as the Provincial Coordinating Group for the Canadian Farm Business Management Program (funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) whose mandate is to improve Ontario farmers' farm business management practices. OATI provides hands-on training to the agriculture industry. Courses are offered in subject fields such as Train the Trainer and Marketing Management (including "Open Your Gates to Tourism"). The Institute also provides access to a range of training and management manuals which can be used to guide agritourism operators in their activities (www.oati.com).

1.3.5 Québec

A large set of sites and attractions is associated with Québec's agritourism industry. Maple syrup operators, honey producers, wineries, cheese producers, as well as accommodation, food service and agricultural events suppliers offer agritourism products and services. There is a large variation in both the type of operation and the quality of products or services offered. Many of the agritourism operations do not have the capacity to entertain more than a few tourists at a time or are open only on limited occasions. However, there are other sites that offer more than one product or service. These often combine an educational experience with the sale of products and the serving of farm meals. In some cases, facilities which cater to large groups of tourists have been in existence for a long time and have a budget and scale of operation which permits them to market their products to large groups such as coach tours. Some of the more developed and/or unique agritourism operations are as follows:

➤ *Maple Syrup Farms*

Maple syrup operations are one of the most popular forms of agritourism in Québec. They attract tourists from around the world. Many of the more successful maple syrup farms have focussed on a traditional or folkloric type of operation - demonstrating how maple syrup was produced in the past. These operations are also successful in selling their produce in various forms (e.g. maple sugar, maple butter, syrup and foods) with many of these operators having to purchase additional supplies for sale from neighbouring commercial producers.

➤ *Conferences and Festivals*

There are a variety of agricultural festivals in Québec whose original purpose was to promote agricultural awareness and the sale of agricultural products. However, many of these have strayed from their agricultural roots and have become primarily community recreation or sporting events with little emphasis on agriculture. Realising this and with the knowledge that agritourism can contribute to the regional economy, the organizers of Québec agricultural exhibitions have recently passed a resolution that future fairs should place more emphasis on agri-foods and agriculture.

➤ *Wineries and Vineyards*

Québec vineyards and wineries are an important component of the agritourism industry. Many of them have three facets to their operation - tourism, education and the sale of products. These operations have had to focus on tourists for the sale of their products because Québec liquor regulations prevent producers from selling alcohol through other outlets.

➤ *Agri-Tours*

Two types of farm-based agri-tours occur in Québec: exotic and folkloric. A recent *Québec Agritourism Study* points out that the operators of such ventures may be in danger of creating forms of agriculture just for tourists, thereby doing a disservice to the province's agriculture industry and the tourist seeking authentic experiences.

Policies/Directives

While the Québec Federation of Agritours was established some 25 years ago, it has not been very focused on promoting agritourism in the province. Some co-ordinated regional initiatives such as the development of the Charlevoix Taste Route are now underway to promote agritourism.

Product and Market Development Initiatives

Fédération des Agricotours du Québec

The highest profile organization supporting agritourism in Quebec is Le Federation des Agricotours du Québec. This private non-profit organization's goal is to ensure the development, promotion and quality of tourist accommodations in private homes and small inns as well as of various agritourism programs. It has developed a network for Bed and Breakfasts, Country Inns, Farm Stays, Country and City Homes, Country-Style Dining and Farm Excursions (<http://www.agricotours.qc.ca/indexa.html>).

1.3.6 New Brunswick

Agritourism development in New Brunswick is relatively limited in the scope of its activities and the variety of its product offerings. Its niche position in the marketplace is closely linked to the agricultural and heritage landscape. *Edible Adventures* is a prime example of its agritourism initiatives.

➤ ***Edible Adventures***

Day trips take rural travellers from the harvest to the table. The program currently includes fourteen packages such as:

- Maple Sugar Madness, which features a hike to a sugar camp, participation in the production of maple syrup and the baking of a maple sugar treat; and
- Splendid Scenes and Salad Greens, which highlights a bike tour of a herbal farm, pepper hothouse and edible flower garden, and the preparation of a customized salad and dressing.

Policy/Directives

A *Cottage Winery Policy* fostering the development of small-scale winery and cider operations was established in 1998. In addition, a Rural Development Symposium was implemented in 1999 with a special emphasis on learning the strategies, solutions and successes associated with innovations and trends in rural development (<http://www.gov.nb.ca/AFA-APA/70/08/7008008e.htm>).

Product and Market Development Initiatives

A variety of initial programs, which encourage agritourism development, have been instituted in recent years. Prominent programs in this regard include:

➤ ***Product Development Program***

The province's Rural Development Branch launched a Product Development Program in 1998. Its aim was to support cottage industry producers that were developing new products for entry into the marketplace. The Edible Adventure agritourism product was also launched in 1998, along with a Farmers' Market Development Strategy. Currently, there are 27 farmers' markets in the province (<http://www.apascc.org/other/nbardjan1999.htm>).

➤ ***Provincial Travel Planner***

Participants in the Edible Adventures program are advertised in the Provincial Travel Planner and other travel guides. They are also featured on the Provincial website and information concerning them can be obtained via a 1-800 number.

1.3.7 Nova Scotia

The agritourism sector in Nova Scotia is comprised of operating farms offering overnight accommodation, community festivals, events and attractions, as well as several rural adventure tourism and recreation operations. A 1996 study estimated that about \$29 million annually in direct economic impacts were attributable to agritourism in the province. Included in this estimate were the impact of room nights at farms and country inns, rural attractions, road-side markets and U-Pick farms, and agriculturally-based festivals and events such as Atlantic Blossom Festival and Atlantic Winter Fair.

Policy/Directives

Nova Scotia undertook the development of an agritourism strategy for Nova Scotia in 1996. It was initiated by the Nova Scotia Agriculture and Marketing, Marketing Services Branch (shosking@es.nsac.ns.ca).

The discussion paper emanating from that report suggested that agriculture based tourism should not be treated as a separate entity from the tourism industry. The strategy called for:

- local and community leadership as a means of developing rural tourism;
- co-ordinated and co-operative planning and marketing of rural tourism opportunities;
- reliable regional data and research on rural tourism supply/demand factors; and
- the creation of more high quality tourism products and product variety in rural areas (http://agri.gov.ns.ca/news/1996/vol6_7/agritour.htm)

Product and Market Development Initiatives

Priorities for sustainable development were reinforced in the Ministry of Agriculture's goals for agritourism (1999-2000). More specifically these goals and their associated objectives were:

- *Goal:* Encourage the competitiveness of the agriculture and food industry so that new employment and income opportunities are created.
- *Objective:* Investigate new development opportunities including new crops, agritourism initiatives and value-added products for both domestic and export markets.
- *Priorities and activities:* Increase the opportunities of existing and new agriculture, food product and agri-businesses through information and education.

1.3.8 Newfoundland and Labrador

There are approximately 30 agritourism operations in Newfoundland. These operations include agricultural fairs and festivals, farm-based bed and breakfasts, U-picks, farm tours, wineries, and roadside markets. Most of these businesses operate independently, with few initiatives combining various dimensions of these operations into larger packages suited to the marketplace. They are dispersed throughout the province and vary in both scale and degree of reliance on tourism markets.

Policy/Directives

A Study of Agritourism (1999) sponsored by the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Agriculture (<http://www.gov.nf.ca/agric/Tourism/review.htm>) suggested that there is considerable potential for offering products that will interpret and celebrate existing agriculture in both Newfoundland and Labrador. The Agritourism report called for a series of initiatives related to:

- agritourism training;
- promotion of agriculture produce of interest to tourism;
- development of standards associated with safety, signage, sanitation and aesthetics;
- signage/symbols: Road signage should be developed to identify where agritourism activities or products have met minimum standards;
- the regulatory environment: Certain regulations regarding the preparation and serving of food on farms, should be pursued;
- agritourism operator database: Establishing a database which can be used for future information mail-outs, industry updates, and promotional opportunities.

Product and Market Development Initiatives

A key initiative involved facilitating agritourism workshops ("*Open Your Gates To Tourism*") conducted by The Ontario Agricultural Training Institute in 2000. In addition, a variety of marketing projects are under consideration. Opportunities for partnering and packaging agritourism products and services within the context of cultural tourism are being considered.

1.3.9 United States

Many state governments in the US have realized the importance of direct marketing and agritourism for raising revenue for farmers and rural tourism operators. US Census data indicates that about 4.5% of American farms report some degree of agritourism activity (Ference Weicker & Company, 1999). In this context, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) developed a Direct Marketing Action Plan in 1998. It was designed to enhance the ability of small farm operators to thrive in their businesses by facilitating the marketing of their agricultural products. Small farms were identified as those with less than \$250,000 in annual gross receipts. About ninety-four percent of American farms qualified as small farms under this definition.

Under AMS's definition, direct marketing included farmer's markets, pick your own farms, roadside stands, subscription farming, community-supported agriculture, and catalogue sales (<http://www.fwco.com/agritour.html>). Farm products sold through direct marketing include fruits, vegetables, nuts, honey, meats, eggs, flowers, plants, herbs, spices, specialty crops, Christmas trees, and value-added products such as maple sugar candies, cider, jellies, preserves, canned food, and firewood. Outcomes expected from this plan include:

- establishing a principal contact at USDA for information regarding farmer direct marketing;
- creating new direct marketing networks and identifying and responding to marketing issues affecting small farmers by sponsoring an annual forum of farmers market managers and conducting regional focus groups;

- developing a model for holding farmers markets on Federal property based on experience gained from the 1997, 1998, and 1999 markets held in the Washington, D.C. area. The model will be updated annually and will be available to all agencies through the AMS website;
- establishing a one-stop farmer direct marketing information clearinghouse for handling inquiries and routing calls to appropriate sources. An extensive knowledge base will be developed and made available through the AMS Farmer Direct Marketing website (www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing);
- establishing a directory of all active farmers markets, which will be maintained at the website, with a new directory published in July of each year;
- developing a training program for managers of farmers markets and marketing information programs for small farmers, which will be available electronically or through distance learning facilities; and
- feasibility studies for year-round farmers market facilities.

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA)

The NAFDMA provides information and education support to direct farm marketing operators in Canada and the United States. There are 28 Canadian members, of which 6 are from British Columbia. NAFDMA helps operators to maximize their ability to meet the needs of their customers. Other groups, associated with direct farm marketing, such as individuals working in extension, education, farmers' market management, government or industry suppliers, are invited to join NAFDMA. These members can benefit from NAFDMA's practical and current information on direct marketing.

In 1999 the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service, made a funding commitment to NAFDMA of \$40,000.00. The intent for these funds is to create a more organized network of state and regional farm direct marketing organizations throughout the United States. The financial support is part of a larger co-operative agreement between the Agricultural Marketing Service of USDA and NAFDMA. The two organizations will also seek participation from collaborators within USDA Extension, academia, and state departments of agriculture to assist in developing materials, facilitating workshops, and fostering direct marketing programs that will likely result from the project. Specifically, the objectives of the agreement are to:

- develop a national directory of farm direct marketing associations, detailing their organizational structure, operational features, and activities;
- develop a series of manuals that describe how to start and expand a farm direct marketing association as a means of facilitating farm direct sales to consumers;
- convene a series of workshops to test suitability and viability of manuals for implementation; and
- produce copies of final manuals and distribute information to the direct marketing industry (http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/news_12_99.htm#four).

The USDA also has a variety of loans, grants, cost-shares, and technical assistance programs that can help producers grow and/or diversify their agricultural enterprises.

Membership dues for NAFDMA are currently \$75/U.S. annually. Some of the member services include:

- annual marketing conference and tour;
- free subscription to either the Fruit or Vegetable Growers News;
- NAFDMA newsletters "Market Connections" annually;
- NAFDMA website link;
- participation in the NAFDMA annual media event;
- NAFDMA membership binder;
- a "Members Only" summer tour;
- an insurance program for NAFDMA members. The 2001-2002 program includes general liability insurance including products liability of \$1,000,000 with no deductible, and robbery of money coverage of \$1,000; and
- full-time office assistance & information (EST) toll free number 1-888-884-9270.

Paralleling the direct marketing initiative, U.S. Congress allocated \$2.5 million in 2000 to a national agritourism program providing technical assistance to farmers wishing to finance new agritourism projects. These funds were to assist in:

- developing tourism advertising and marketing campaigns;
- co-ordinating agritourism efforts at the state level;
- addressing farmer's agritourism infrastructure needs; and
- expanding development initiatives associated with farmers' markets, food festivals, bed and breakfasts, farm tours, and heritage trails (<http://bernie.house.gov/earth/agritourism.asp>).

California

California generates more money from agriculture revenues than any other U.S. state (\$25.9 billion in 1999). However, California statistics indicate that most of its 75,000 farms occupy less than 50 acres and gross less than \$50,000 yearly. The diversity of the state's agriculture operations, combined with its popularity as a tourist destination, and growing market demand for near urban countryside tourism products and services have created unprecedented agritourism opportunities for California farm operators. The state has identified agricultural tourism as one alternative for improving the incomes and potential economic viability of small farms and rural communities.

Agritourism development in the state includes over 800 attractions such as wineries, farm or nursery trails, farm stays, agricultural festivals, entertainment farms, demonstration farms, petting zoos, roadside stands, pick your own farms, agricultural museums and over 300 Certified Farmers' Markets. Some of these forms of agritourism enterprise are well developed, but other businesses still offer potential for development.

Beyond booming wine tourism developments, many California counties offer other forms of agritourism experience including: fruit and harvest "trails", pick-your-own-fruit farms, farm tours and farmers' markets; dude ranches and bed and breakfast inns; and agriculturally-based festivals. Other smaller farm-flavoured lodgings exist, but they typically spend little effort on promotion and lie beneath the radar of most travellers.

Policies/Directives

Under a 1999 legislative bill, the state has eased restrictions on farmers who want to house paying guests and feed them more than breakfast. (Until then, lodgings that served lunch and dinner had generally been required to have the same costly kitchen facilities as full-scale restaurants). However, the state law does not supersede local restrictions, which leave matters largely unchanged in counties with stringent growth controls. Legislative Bill AB 1258 allows owners of properties whose principal income is derived from agricultural products to have six guest rooms and 15 visitors nightly.

Product and Market Development Initiatives

Several programs have been developed in California to support the development of various components of the agritourism industry. These include:

➤ Small Farm Center

A special working group was formed in 1999 by the University of California Small Farm Center. Funded by a \$200,000 grant from the Fund for Rural America, this group is headed by the director of the Small Farm Program (SFP). It includes other SFP staff members, farmers, farm industry representatives, tour operators and educators. It provides workshops, training materials, newsletters, web contacts, case studies, and academic research to agritourism and other farm operators. (<http://danr012.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/agritour.html>).

To date the Small Farm Program:

- has developed a project "Adding Value to Agriculture: A Collaborative Approach Based on Agricultural Tourism";
- manages the California Agritourism Database (<http://calagtour.org/>). The database is organized by region, county and category of agritourism;
- distributes Small Farm News newsletters profiling agritourism operations (<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/agprofiles.html>);
- distributes Fact Sheets for Managing Agri- and Nature-Tourism Operations (<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/factsheet2.html>);
- publishes articles, presentations and reports by the Statewide Agricultural Tourism Working Group (<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/articles.html>); and
- provides links related to agritourism websites (<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/links.html>).

Case Study: World Famous Pizza Farm

Pizza Farm is a half-acre farm in Madera, California that grows actual pizza ingredients and educates the public about agriculture. It was the unique idea of a circular mini-farm with wedge-shaped lots producing pizza ingredients that led to the trademark registration of the Pizza Farm.

Visitors take a one-hour tour and presentation that includes information about dairy, pork, beef, tomatoes, peppers, wheat and more. "We briefly discuss as many topics as we can in a kind of Ag 101 format," explains Schmall (the owner of the farm). In addition to details about producing each ingredient, the presentation covers more than 20 topics such as suburban sprawl and integrated pest management.

The Pizza Farm is a non-profit organization, and all proceeds are reinvested in agricultural education programs. More than 100,000 visitors have toured the site. "The impact on society from an ag-literacy standpoint is tremendous," says Schmall. He plans to have 200 Pizza Farm franchises around the country. He estimates that those developed near big cities could attract 100,000 visitors a year.

(<http://pizzafarmer@pizzafarm.org/.html>)

➤ *California Federation of Certified Farmers' Markets*

The certified farmers market concept seeks to re-establish the traditional link between farmers and consumers in California. Certified farmers' markets (CFM's) are places where farmers sell their crops directly to the public. More specifically, a CFM is a location approved by the county agricultural commissioner where certified farmers offer for sale only those agricultural products they grow themselves. California Certified Farmers' Markets are operated in accordance with regulations established in 1977 by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Only a handful of CFM's were in the California direct marketing program in 1977. There are now over 350 communities with Certified Farmers Markets and that base is growing every year (<http://farmersmarket.ucdavis.edu/docs/about.html>).

Market Research

Market research conducted on agritourism consumer markets in southern California may be especially relevant to the development of this industry in BC. For instance, research conducted in 1999 by a major floral display tourism attraction, The Flower Fields™ in California, suggests that:

- most visitors had purchased farm products directly from farmers with roadside stands and farmers' markets.
- freshness, quality, local origin, taste and convenience were the most important factors in the decision to purchase farm products. This suggests that locally grown products and local growers could benefit by promoting the uniqueness and local nature of their products.

- as is the case with other economic development activities, external inputs (strategic partners) may be needed to stimulate the farm sector to perceive and capitalize on agritourism opportunities.
- farmers must overcome their traditional views of farming and realise that activities like agritourism require the exchange of services in addition to the products they sell.
- agritourism requires an entrepreneurial approach driven by an understanding of consumer behaviour, attitudes and preferences that can inform and shape product development.
- additional institutions/associations may be needed to assist farmers in carrying out event management, promotion/advertising and information management functions needed to facilitate the co-ordination and growth of agritourism.
- support for agritourism activities may come from a variety of sources. Local county governments should investigate diversifying their tourism destinations and attractions to include countywide attractions such as agritourism. This may help preserve agricultural land by enhancing the economic viability of farm operations; by spreading the economic benefits among local communities; and by stimulating and spreading employment opportunities to a wider geographic area (<http://www.corf.org/CORF%20News/2000/Spring/Agritourism%20Benefits%20Farmers.htm>).

Oregon

Agritourism development in Oregon is many faceted. The product mix includes farm and ranch stays, wineries and micro-breweries, gardens and nurseries, farmers' markets and road stands, wildlife viewing, festivals, interpretive activities and culinary tours. These are listed clearly on internet sites such as http://www.aglink.org/membersarea/agritourism/tourism_countryside.htm.

Two of the higher profile forms of agritourism in the state are farmer's markets and wineries. In Oregon, farmers' markets provide fresh farm products to consumers, give growers an outlet for their goods, and establish a strong link between urban and rural communities. There are 45 farmers' markets in the state.

Oregon ranks nationally as second in total number of wineries and fourth in wine production in the United States. It is an industry estimated to contribute over \$125 million annually to the state's agricultural and tourist economies. Wine grape growing is conducted by hundreds of family-owned farms in Oregon. More than 167 wineries and over 500 vineyards in Oregon work cooperatively to create wine. Many of these wineries offer cellar door sales and wine tourism experiences for travellers.

Policies/Directives

The state of Oregon has recognised the potential opportunities to be gained by developing its agritourism and value-added processing industries. To enhance opportunities for these forms of farm diversification, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) works with several other state and federal entities to provide information and support for those farm operations with the potential to develop an added tourism dimension to their operations. The ODA uses its education and information programs to assist farmers in networking and co-operative project development. It has been particularly influential in having specific forms of agritourism signs included in the permissible categories of the Tourist Oriented Directional Sign state legislation. It also assists

existing agritourism operations in their marketing and development activities. The state has two key pieces of legislation that support and guide the development of agritourism.

- *Oregon Revised Statute 215.283* addresses agritourism related use of farmland. This statute specifies various permitted commercial activities (e.g. bed and breakfast accommodations, destination resorts, living history museums, home occupations, campgrounds, etc.) that are in conjunction with farm use. All of these activities are subject to approval of the governing body in any area zoned for exclusive farm use.
- *Oregon Revised Statute 215.452* clarifies land use in the context of wineries. This statute specifies general winery conditions and criteria for wineries in agricultural zones. It allows only the sale of wines produced in conjunction with the winery and items directly related to wine, the sales of which are incidental to retail sales of wine on-site. It also imposes standards that limit conflicts between wineries and accepted farming practices on adjacent lands.

Product and Market Development Initiatives

The Agri-business Council of Oregon provides an agritourism activity index and business directory on its website (http://www.aglink.org/membersarea/agritourism/tourism_countryside.htm). The Council uses "The Country Side of Oregon" marketing campaign to highlight the unique and abundant farmland and ranches of Oregon State. The Council markets Oregon's rural landscapes as special places where festivals and recreational adventures occur. The Council's Agri-Tourism & Rural Experiences brochure lists Oregon businesses that provide services and activities to the public.

➤ ***Keeping Agriculture Viable in Oregon Program***

The *Keeping Agriculture Viable in Oregon Program* has drawn support from agricultural industry leaders. As Oregon becomes even more urbanized, and as Oregonians become another generation removed from the farm, it is becoming increasingly clear that public awareness and acceptance will be a lifeline for agriculture in the state. In this regard, the *Keeping Agriculture Viable in Oregon Program* (KAV) is currently (2001) entering year two of its public awareness building activity. Its promotional messages centre on emphasising to all Oregonians how agriculture impacts them. It uses local people to express the message that Oregonians will reflect more about their personal connection to agriculture.

New York State

In New York State, agritourism spans a wide range of on-farm recreation and hospitality businesses. These include farm tours, farm bed and breakfasts, wineries, petting zoos, fee hunting and fishing, horse riding, and hay rides. Approximately 100 wineries with varying levels of access to tourists also exist within the State. These enterprises typically exist along with other retail operations on the farm, such as roadside farms stands, pick-your-own operations, craft shops, restaurants and other value-added processing activities. Indeed, a growing number of the state's 2,500 U-Pick and farm market operators are establishing entertainment-related activities. These include hay and sleigh rides, pumpkin picking events, as well as demonstrations and guided tours of apple cider pressing, maple syrup production, sheep shearing, and wool processing. Agritourism operations of this kind have increased 30% over five years, with more than 1300 farm-tour sites, festivals, hayrides and markets. All of these creative means are being used to encourage potential

customers to come to the farm to buy farm products. In most cases such pursuits increase the farmer's gross receipts through increased customer traffic.

Policy Directives

To support agritourism and direct farm marketing activities in some of the more depressed rural regions of the state, the USDA undertook the development of a Strategic Plan in 1999. The primary purpose of this program was to identify a means of affecting economic and social change in a declining rural economy. Based on local rural resident input, the strategic plan outlined 28 major projects with associated goals, indicators, tasks, and timelines. The overall goals of the plan include supporting and developing the tourism industry; supporting and developing agriculture, agribusiness, and agritourism; and preserving agricultural and open space.

Product and Market Development Initiatives

Several regional and state-wide development projects have been implemented to increase the effectiveness of these farm activities. These include:

- the development of a Farm Tours brochure program promoting agritourism in various regions of the State;
- the development of several training publications on how to open and operate farm-based bed and breakfast businesses, as well as other agritourism and valued-added processing enterprises;
- the delivery of professional development conferences for agritourism farmers. These conferences provide training related to such issues as 'promoting and merchandising your business,' 'insurance and legalities,' 'making your business multi-seasonal,' and 'thinking like a tourist';
- the establishment of a Farming Alternatives Program which is dedicated to enhancing the sustainability of farming. This program conducts on-going research and education projects on environmentally sound farming practices and new marketing strategies. The program's staff provides information, and referrals to diverse audiences - prospective farmers, agricultural educators, rural development organizations and community decision makers. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Marketing provides support for the program (<http://www.developitioga.com/REAP/part7.htm>).

Michigan

Michigan has a well-established rural tourism industry. A portion of this success can be attributed to the types of capacity building and support programs it provides for rural tourism operators and farmers. A central source of capacity building is associated with the Michigan State University Extension Tourism Area of Expertise.

Product and Market Development Initiatives

The Michigan State University Extension Tourism Area of Expertise has developed a set of programs, which are designed to support agritourism and other forms of rural tourism development (<http://www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/mastertd.html>). These include a database that inventories and distributes relevant resource materials related to rural tourism. Currently the database contains

over 250 Extension resource materials including bulletins, research reports, videos, and training programs. Nearly 100 documents are on-line in full text. A sample publication in this regard is *Points to Consider for Operators in Setting up Agritourism* (<http://www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modtd/33831715.html>).

1.3.10 Australia

Australian agritourism suppliers offer a wide range of products and activities. Agritourism has become one of the most sought after "AUSSIE EXPERIENCES" for inbound visitors. There are approximately 1,300 holiday farms in Australia. However, only around 200 of them provide all inclusive services for international visitors - accommodation, meals, refreshments, local transfer from coach, air and rail terminals, and farm activities. There are over forty international standard farms that can host groups of 20 to 200 guests at one time. Agritourism experiences include farm holidays, horse-riding treks, day farm visits, and wine tasting tours for individual travellers and groups.

Policy/Directives

In Australia, farm vacations or "stays" are recognised as a significant component of the country's tourism product mix. Farm stay tourism is regarded as a strategic tactic in the farm industry's search for income supplements and business diversification opportunities. The nation's State tourism authorities have regional branches, which all play marketing and promotional roles with host farms. In some cases the host farmers are asked to pay for the inclusion of their properties in State brochures. Each State within the country has a membership funded Association representing Host Farm operators. The State Associations play a role in promoting their member's products in advertising brochures. In some cases they also assist with co-ordinating reservation bookings.

About a third of the membership in these associations operate farm stay facilities. The nationally based Australian Farm and Country Tourism Inc. is comprised of two representatives from each of the State Associations. It is mandated to co-ordinate the promotion of agritourism at the national level. Its role is to contribute to the efficiency, quality and profitability of Australia's rural tourism operators, while increasing the profile and recognition of the importance of tourism for rural Australia. It has helped establish national standards for agritourism operations. Accreditation standards and training programs have been developed to assist in moving agritourism operations towards those standards. The Australian Tourism Industry Association also promotes farm stay tourism as a component of its overall tourism product portfolio.

Product and Market Development Initiatives

Australia has developed a relatively sophisticated marketing system for its agritourism products and services. Australian Farmhost Holidays began marketing agritourism to the international travel industry in the early 1970s. It provides a twenty-four hour turnaround reservations service for all international standard host farms and products throughout the nation. Australian farm stays are often sold as complete packages, with visitors being able to choose the type of farms and activities they wish to pursue. In addition farm stays holidays can be linked with other self drive, coach, rail and air packages around the country. These farm and country holidays have an official national quality control star rated system controlled by the Australian Automobile Association (<http://www.travelaus.com.au/farmhost/>).

Case Study: Discover Tasmania!

Agritourism is strongly promoted via Tasmania's main tourism website. The site's creative approach features agritourism opportunities under several key themes. These include:

- *Where to Stay* lists accommodations at "homesteads and farmstays".
- *Things to Do* describes Tasmania's food and wine journeys, which includes listings of farms, wine routes and vineyards.
- *Lifestyle & Culture* lists gardens and markets that are open to the public, as well as events, such as "Blooming Tasmania", a celebration of Tasmania's gardens.

<http://www.discovertasmania.com.au/home/index.cfm>

1.3.11 Europe

United Kingdom

Agritourism and other forms of on-farm diversification have grown into an increasing requirement for financial stability in United Kingdom farm businesses. About a third of all farm businesses are now engaged in non-traditional agricultural enterprises. An estimated 42 percent of farms in England, 34 percent in Wales, 23 percent in Scotland, and 7 percent in Ireland have diversified. About forty percent of these enterprises have been initiated since 1985, with about 14,000 farms benefiting from such diversification. On average these ventures contribute about 11% percent of the total business income on farms in the United Kingdom.

Policies/Directives

Many of the rural tourism and agritourism development programs in the United Kingdom are driven by policies applicable in other European jurisdictions. Agritourism received its most significant boost from the European Union through the Objective 5b Program. Operating between 1994-1999, this program provided funds for six rural areas in need of economic regeneration. Farms in designated areas could obtain capital investment for new farm tourism projects or to upgrade existing amenities, and financial assistance with marketing, business development and training. Funding had to be matched by similar investment from farmers, the private sector and other participants. Capital projects ranged from guest accommodation and leisure attractions to farm shops and craft centres. The goal of Objective 5b was to encourage new participants in agritourism and to improve the quality of farm projects.

Product and Market Development Initiatives

The UK's most significant agritourism marketing organization is the Farm Holiday Bureau (FHB). It co-ordinates the marketing of a network of over 1000 farms providing both bed and breakfast and self-catering accommodation. These establishments are found throughout the United Kingdom. The focus of the marketing program is on promoting quality accommodation with value for money prices.

FHB member properties are inspected regularly to ensure that a high standard of cleanliness, courtesy and service is maintained. All members must agree to meet its minimum standards and observe its code of conduct. Most of the farms listed in the FHB guide are full members of the Farm Holiday Bureau. They belong to local groups that share information and best practices that help raise quality standards within the industry.

Each of the UK's National Tourist Organizations operates its own classification scheme for serviced accommodation and self-catering properties related to agritourism. As well, different symbols are used for specific jurisdictions. Similarly each country in the UK has developed its own support systems for agritourism development.

Other Supporting Programs

Ireland's Department of Agriculture and Food has developed a Grant Aid for Agritourism and Organic Farming program (<http://www.csfinfo.com/htm/projects/agriculture/agritourism.htm>). The objective of the scheme is to ensure a regular supply of organic produce to the market by the development of organic co-operatives/groups/companies. Grant aid of 50% is available to farmers, groups, companies or co-operatives for the provision of facilities for grading, packing, storage and distribution of organic produce. Grant aid of 70% is available to recognised bodies for marketing and promotion in support of organic farming.

Italy

Product and Market Development Initiatives

Established on or around the grounds of farmhouse villas, castles and wineries in Tuscany, Umbria and other regions of Italy, Italian agriturismo is built around family-run operations that include accommodations ranging from bed and breakfast to large apartments and separate houses with living areas, kitchens and private baths.

The experience at a farm may include dining with the host family, assisting in the grape harvest, or merely enjoying the intimacy of a retreat, which affords the beauty of its setting as well as privacy and independence from the farm. In addition, the traveller may have the opportunity to pursue individual interests such as horseback riding, painting classes, swimming, mountain biking, hiking or learning about the regional cuisine of Italy by participating in cooking classes (<http://www.italyfarmholidays.com/>).

1.4. AGRITOURISM LESSONS IN POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

In jurisdictions around the globe, policies and programs encourage expansion of the supply of agritourism and value-added processing activities. A variety of measures aimed specifically at farm operations, regional and local development and conservation processes, marketing campaigns, and training and development initiatives have helped Agritourism's growth in these regions.

In North America, the policies and programs aimed at agritourism are relatively few and limited in their scope. Most of them have been created in isolation from policies and programs related to tourism product development and marketing needs. In many jurisdictions, agritourism and value-added processing have emerged in spite of government policy. However, there are important policy lessons and operating practices to be learned from the experiences gained in these jurisdictions. These lessons relate to:

Agritourism Policy Lessons From Other Jurisdictions

- Agricultural and tourism industry co-ordination
- Local/regional support structures
- Product quality standards
- Local involvement and alliances
- Product development/marketing
- Clarity in legislation and interpretation

➤ *Co-ordinating and linking policies and programs*

There is a growing need for policy and programs which link accommodation, facilities, activities, and marketing programs together in ways which increase co-ordination, encourage strategic alliances and reduce redundancies and costs in programming.

➤ *Establishing supportive organizational structures and processes*

Agritourism requires not only policy and program support for the development of facilities, but also for the installation of organizational structures for program delivery. This involves establishing effective local and regional structures to ensure the co-ordination of decisions on who participates and how products and services are marketed.

➤ *Promoting product quality and identification*

There is a need for policy and programming which encourages higher levels of product quality as well as establishing clearer local product differentiation. Whenever possible, these efforts should be integrated with other regional and local programs that build local identity and distinctive product positioning in the minds of consumers.

➤ *Standards allowing diversity of small operators*

While appropriate and recognisable standards of supply are necessary to instil consumer confidence in the products provided, if based on national standards they must be flexible enough to allow for diversity in the marketplace and permit the entry of small operators. Artificial exclusion of potential suppliers on the basis that they cannot meet predetermined standards can be counter-productive. The important point is to communicate honestly about the standards that are present in any agritourism or value-added processing product. This includes recognising the specific product needs of different markets, and allowing customers to exercise choice.

➤ *Promoting local involvement and alliances*

Integration and co-ordination of product development and marketing efforts enables local communities to manage their operations in ways that suit their own needs. The benefits of agritourism and value-added processing are likely to be more positive if local people have some

control over such forms of development. Local involvement and partnerships allow the comparative advantages of groups of farms from specific regions to create unique market positions. Such local alliances can also lead to more cost-effective promotional programs. A key task involves using the Internet as a means of bringing local suppliers of agritourism products and services together for not only promotional purposes, but also for the thematic packaging and positioning of agricultural regions in the minds of travellers and other consumers.

- *Facilitating local product development and marketing*
Larger provincial and national marketing organizations should be encouraged to see the benefits of encouraging local product development and marketing initiatives. Ideally, they should act as facilitators for promoting agritourism products and services in the marketplace.
- *Amending policies to be flexible for diverse agritourism operations and facilities*
There is a need for greater flexibility in the implementation of general development policies. In particular, policies related to physical planning, building permits, health and safety regulations, business and property taxes can have important effects on the viability and feasibility of small-scale agritourism and farm value-added operations. Greater awareness on the part of legislators and farmers about how the interpretation and implementation of existing and emerging development policies can effect farm operations is required.

Chapter 2

BC AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT SNAPSHOT

A wide array of products and services can be offered to travellers interested in agritourism products and services. Three broad categories of such agritourism products and services are fixed attractions, events and services.

Fixed Attractions

Fixed attractions are current or potential generators of tourism. They can range from historic farms, whose primary purpose is to attract visitors, to existing agriculture facilities where attracting visitors is secondary to the main purpose of the operation. The four primary types of fixed attractions are historic farms, living farms, museums, and food processing facilities.

Agritourism Product Categories		
Fixed Attractions	Events	Services
• Historic farms • Living farms • Agricultural museums • Food Processing Facilities	• Conferences/conventions • Rodeos • Agricultural fairs • Historic events • Festivals/events	• Accommodations • Tour operations • Retail sales • Leisure/recreation activities

Events

These are occasions based upon an agricultural theme, whether current or historic. Events take place on a specific date or season, and outside of these times, have limited ability to generate tourism. These events function as attractions and/or destinations, and differ from fixed attractions because of their limited visitation period. This product group can be divided into the categories of: conferences/conventions, rodeos, agricultural fairs, historic events, and festivals/events.

Services

Suppliers of agritourism services can be divided into four primary categories:

- *Accommodations* such as bed and breakfasts and vacation farms.
- *Tours* associated with production or processing facilities (e.g. dairy operations, wineries), or scenic environments (e.g. botanical gardens, vineyards). These tours may be delivered by outside agencies (e.g. tour operator) or on-site farm operators (e.g. tours of botanical gardens).
- *Retail sales* associated with local produce and farm-processed products (e.g. jams, pickles) at their farm gate; "U-pick" fields and orchards; off-site produced gifts, crafts and baked goods.
- *Leisure/recreation activities* associated with hunting and fishing, golfing and hiking.

2.1 PAST AGRITOURISM SUPPLY CHARACTERISTICS

The Opportunity Analysis for Farm-Based Businesses (1997) estimated that there were approximately 449 BC farm operations in 1996 that were engaged in various forms and levels of agritourism or value-added processing. Based on a survey of 262 of these operations it was apparent that:

- 24% were engaged in both agritourism and value-added processing businesses;
- 28% were involved in solely agritourism ventures;
- 36% not currently involved in such activities, planned to do so in the near future; and
- 43% of the agritourism businesses have been operating for less than 5 years.

These operations were distributed across the province in various levels of concentration. For instance:

- the Okanagan and Lower Mainland regions accounted for about 90% of all farm operations involved with agritourism, or a combination of agritourism along with value-added processing.
- about two thirds of these operations were seasonal in nature operating primarily (80%) between June and October.
- the average duration of yearly operation was 174 days, with the longest average period of operation being 224 days on Vancouver Island.
- most of the agritourism operations surveyed provided a diversified range of products and services to their visitors. However, the largest proportion of them focused their operations on the provision of farmgate produce sales (74%), guided farm tours (42%), u-pick opportunities (40%), and retail sales (gifts, crafts, etc.) (35%). Vancouver Island had the highest proportion of farms providing farmgate produce sales (86%), while Lower Mainland and to a lesser extent Okanagan agritourism operations had the highest number of products and services offered per farm. Conversely, agritourism operations in the Kootenays were largely focussed on offering farmgate produce sales and tours. Northern BC operations tended to be the least focussed of any of the other regions in terms of its product offerings.

The overriding economic characteristics of the agritourism operations in 1995 were as follows:

- an estimated 125 full-time, 405 seasonal full-time, and 825 part-time employees were engaged in agritourism jobs.
- about two fifths (39%) of the agritourism operators stated that they earned between \$10,000 and \$50,000 from their tourism businesses in 1995.
- about two thirds (63%) of all agritourism and agritourism with value-added processing businesses had experienced growth in their revenues over the preceding year.
- an estimated \$14.3 million in gross revenues were generated province-wide by strictly agritourism businesses in 1995.
- about two thirds (63%) of all of the agritourism and agritourism with value-added processing operators were expecting continued growth in 1996.

2.2 BC AGRITOURISM SUCCESS FACTORS

Factors influencing the success of BC agritourism operations in 1995 included:

- the capability of the farm operator to accommodate demands of agritourism;
- the accessibility of the farm site to major travel routes and urban centres;
- the capability of farm facilities to accommodate agritourism;
- the farmer's attitude and commitment (resources) to agritourism product development;
- the development of strategic alliances with other rural tourism groups and suppliers;
- the advertising and marketing skills of farm operators; and
- the extent of financial commitment to agritourism product development (Lack 1997).

2.3 CURRENT AGRITOURISM SUPPLY CHARACTERISTICS

While no formal inventories or statistics exist to suggest how far agritourism has advanced since 1996, a growing number of such developments are apparent in tourism related marketing programs. This is especially the case with respect to BC's emerging agriculturally based wine tourism industry. Since 1995, the number of cellar door winery operations has grown from approximately 40 businesses to an estimated 63 in 2001. Associated with these agritourism enterprises is an ever-enlarging set of festivals and events which promote dimensions of BC's agricultural products and services. In the Okanagan Similkameen region alone there are at least 11 agritourism events/festivals that focus on a range of agricultural themes. Nonetheless, the full extent of agritourism development is still unclear.

BC Agritourism Supply - 258 Businesses -

Geographic focus

- The Islands (33%)
- Thompson-Okanagan (28%)
- Vancouver/Lower Mainland (25%)

The following table summarises the characteristics of those agritourism operations inventoried by the BC Ministry of Agriculture in 2000. It is based on information published in existing agricultural and tourism marketing brochures and directories. As such, it may not be complete or representative of all agritourism operations in the province. It does inventory 258 agritourism operations that are actively promoting visitation opportunities. The largest proportion of these are located in the Islands (33%), Thompson Okanagan (28%) and Vancouver (25%) tourism regions (Table 2.4.1).

Table 2.4.1 Estimated Overall Distribution of BC Agritourism Businesses by Tourism Region

REGION	Number of Farms	% of Total Farms
Cariboo Chilcotin Coast	21	8.1
Northern BC	13	5.0
Rocky Mountains	5	1.9
The Islands	84	32.6
Thompson/Okanagan	71	27.5
Vancouver Coast & Mountains	64	24.8
Total	258	100.0

While these operations are engaged in a wide variety of pursuits, the largest proportion of them are involved in the sale of various forms of fresh produce (40%) and wine products (24%). Several of the operations inventoried are also engaged in farm or winery tours (18%), the sale of ranching experiences (14%), flowers and plants (12%), processed foods (11%), U-Pick activities (11%), bed and breakfast accommodation services (11%), as well as the distribution of fresh meats (10%) (Table 2.4.2).

Table 2.4.2 Estimated Overall Distribution of BC Agritourism Products and Services

CATEGORY	Number of Farms	% of Total Farms
Fresh Produce	103	39.9
Flowers & Plants	30	11.6
Fresh Meat	25	9.7
Poultry	13	5.0
Dairy & Eggs	21	8.1
Processed Foods	28	10.9
Wine	61	23.6
Rural Crafts	12	4.7
U-Pick	29	11.2
B&B	27	10.5
Cabins	18	7.0
Campsites/RV Parking	9	3.5
Ranch	36	14.0
Farmhouse	3	1.2
Vineyard Lodging	3	1.2
On-Site Farm/Ranch Tours	25	9.7
On-Site Winery Tours	21	8.1
Holiday Events	16	6.2
Corn Maze	3	1.2
Petting Farms	3	1.2
Education	11	4.3
Festivals	4	1.6
Total	258	100

The concentration and type of these agritourism activities varies by tourism region within BC. For instance, pursuits in the more remote regions of Northern BC tend to be linked most frequently with the sale of fresh meat, fresh produce and ranching tours. The pattern of providing fresh produce opportunities is even more pronounced in the Rocky Mountain region, along with a range of accommodation services. Conversely, the Cariboo-Chilcotin Coast region appears to have focussed its current agritourism initiatives primarily on the delivery of ranching activities and the provision of overnight accommodation facilities. Further south and west, in the Islands tourism region, the range of products and services provided is more varied. In that region, fresh produce sales are associated with more than half the agritourism operations identified. Other forms of development are spread over a range of activities that involve the sale of other farm produce, crafts and accommodation. This pattern is repeated in the Vancouver Coast and Mountains Region, except that more emphasis is placed on the provision of tours and events suited to the large urban populations in the Lower Mainland. In the Thomson/Okanagan region, wine tourism operations dominate the agritourism product portfolio (Appendix 1: Table A-1).

2.4 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Informants at a North American Direct Marketing Conference (January 2001) suggest that a wide array of innovative products and services can be offered to the portfolio of traditional agritourism offerings. These include but are not limited to the following:

- *Looking for opportunities in schools.* Growth in agriculture-education, *Edu-tainment*, education that is entertaining, is evident by the number of farms establishing school tour programs. Farms are charging \$4-6 per child and getting thousands of children a year visiting their farms.
- *Tapping into business markets.* Farms offering retreats and corporate parties offer team-building opportunities. Elaborate mazes, barbecues and informal "farm" facilities provide the backdrop for this type of venture.
- *Incorporating farm stores, farm stands and high-end gift shops into farm direct marketing operations.* This can be done to extend the season and "destination" possibilities, to increase cash flow and to reduce risk.
- *Conducting on-site festivals.* In particular, *Pumpkin Festivals* are becoming very popular. Two major Halloween trade shows in Chicago and Las Vegas offer opportunities to learn about the methods of building excitement concerning on-site farm events with Halloween themes.
- *Turning portions of farms into destination sites.* Attractions and events include: playgrounds (offering farm toys kids can't find in the city), pig races, goat races, slides, enchanted forests, scarecrow making, farm meals, on-farm bakeries, nature walks, animal patches, picnic areas, Christmas themes, mazes, Easter egg and Bunny hunts, Halloween fun houses, inflatable caterpillars, music, face painting, bringing in craft or auto shows, antiques, scavenger hunts (<http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/general/brkgnews.nsf>).

2.5 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

While numerous product development options exist, equally challenging barriers to the formation of agritourism businesses and programs are apparent in many regions. Those barriers that commonly constrain agritourism development in BC include:

- limited information about the needs of agritourism consumers and their perceptions of quality products;
- limited guidelines concerning appropriate product quality and facility design;
- limited road signage for promoting visitor awareness and access;
- limited co-ordination, organization and joint co-operation in marketing;
- limited awareness building and training programs for potential providers of agritourism;
- lack of technical assistance and training;
- inability to generate adequate economic returns;

Agritourism Product Development Challenges

- Consumer information
- Visitor risk/liability
- Farm disease
- Product quality standards
- Financial resources
- Awareness/training
- Technical assistance
- Marketing coordination
- Sign program
- Farm disease

- insufficient resources to warrant new investments;
- difficulty in obtaining finances to develop necessary physical resources and services;
- concern about visitors negatively impacting farming operations;
- concern over legal liability if visitors are injured;
- lack of critical mass of attractions and amenities with which to attract travellers to a destination; and
- inappropriate facility design.

(Ference & Weicker, 1999; Weaver and Fennell 1997; Lack 1997, Fawcett 1996; Williams 1993; Gannon 1994; Tung 1990).

Case Study: Improving Agritourism Facility Design

Under-utilised farm sites often represent potential venues for agritourism activity. However, in many instances, farm facilities are more appropriately designed for food production purposes than tourist visits. Research concerning the product preferences of Japanese tourists interested in visiting rural areas suggests that agritourism operators should focus on developing facilities and on-site programs which:

- meet international standards of hygiene and cleanliness;
- offer a range of food and recreation services;
- maintain or enhance the "rural naturalness" image;
- incorporate cultural components;
- facilitate host-guest interchanges; and
- create soft adventure experiences that include non-threatening contact with natural areas and wildlife.

(Murphy and Williams, *Tourism Management*, 1996).

2.6 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT BEST PRACTICES

The following vignettes describe innovative agritourism products and services, which have been successfully implemented in various jurisdictions.

Case Study: Agritourism Cookbooks

Ancaster Information Centre and Community Services has partnered with agritourism operators to produce a cookbook featuring and promoting the local agri-food sector ("A Cultivating Taste"—Celebrating the Fine Products from the Farms, Farm Markets and Orchards In and Around Ancaster Ontario). Text commentary and maps direct readers to local producers' outlets. The book's recipes feature local ingredients and local suppliers.

(<http://www.adaptcouncil.org/marketin.html> (1998))

Case Study: Okanagan Wine Festival

The Okanagan Fall Wine Festival has attained strong regional and growing national recognition. Designed to help wineries showcase their top wines, it also has assisted tourism establishments (including restaurants, agritourism operators and accommodators throughout the Okanagan) in promoting travel to the region at a traditionally slow business period. The festival includes a variety of wine and food pairing dinners, outdoor activities held at the wineries and leading resort properties, and major wine tasting shows. Special local events include pig roasts, jazz brunches, grape stomps, classical music evenings combined with gourmet elegant dinners, and winery tours.

(Baldwin, B. Inn Focus, 1998)

Case Study: Community Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a growing component of agricultural diversification and marketing. It is designed to help diversify and add income streams, as well as supply interest-free cash for many farm operations. From an agritourism perspective, some CSA programs forge meaningful relationships between farmers and non-farmers, and between urban and rural people. In some cases, members of these programs become agritourists by camping in tents at farms, participating in the work, and engaging socially with the farm family.

Small Farm News, Summer 1999

(<http://danr012.ucdavis.edu/pubs/SFNews/Summer99/emerge.html>)

Case Study: Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets cater to growing public demand for farm-fresh, flavourful produce. These distribution venues also encourage local and regional tourists to participate in unique food shopping experiences. This is of increasing value to travellers. Farmers' Markets not only help travellers to become more meaningfully engaged in purchasing products but also more aware of the producers of these items.

(<http://danr012.ucdavis.edu/pubs/SFNews/Summer99/emerge.html>)

Case Study: Capturing Pass-Thru Rural Traffic

In Vermont 22 million people visit the state annually without staying overnight. Local agritourism committees are developing rural adventures such as gourmet get-away packages which combine different meals and overnight accommodations experiences. These elements are being paired in farm settings to encourage more travellers to stop and visit rural areas as agritourists.

Small Farm Centre: sfcentre@ucdavis.edu

Chapter 3

AGRITOURISM TRAVEL MARKET CHARACTERISTICS

Tourist markets for BC agritourism products and services can be divided into three primary groups:

- Resident Tourists - those people who live in BC and have an interest and willingness to participate in agriculturally-related travel experiences.
- Non-resident Tourists - people who live outside of BC that have the potential to visit BC and participate in agriculturally-related tourist experiences (e.g. other non BC Canadians, United States, and other international visitors).
- Niche/Speciality Markets - people that have the potential to visit BC for business or educational purposes (e.g. travellers attending business-related conferences and educational programs).

3.1 BC RESIDENT AGRITOURISM MARKETS

Residents of BC consistently account for the majority of tourist activity that occurs within the province. In 1999, they represented about 48% of the total overnight visitors in the province (Tourism British Columbia (TBC) 2001a). In 2001, resident travel (intra-provincial travel) is expected to account for an estimated 10.9 million overnight person-trips, an amount comparable with levels achieved in 1999. These visitors should generate an estimated 26% of the province's overnight visitors in 2001 (TBC, 2001b).

Resident Tourism Markets

- 48% of total overnight visitors to BC (1999)
- 40% day trippers
- 60% overnight
- Dining, farmers' markets, events/festivals

The travel activities of provincial residents are of particular interest to certain agritourism businesses. Heritage attractions and agriculturally themed events capture a great deal of their visitors from provincial markets. In BC, about 2.3% of resident travellers visited a farm or winery in 1995-96 (BCVS, 1995-96).

3.1.1 Local/Regional Markets

Outside of their participation in events and periodic visitation to cultural attractions that exist within their own area, local and regional travel markets provide both day and overnight visit potential for agritourism developments. In 1999, an estimated 9.4 million pleasure or visiting friends and relatives trips of 80+ kilometres were taken in the province by BC residents. Of these trips, about 40% were no more than a day in duration (Canadian Travel Survey (CTS 1999). In many cases, these day trippers probably had no direct need for accommodation and were most likely to have had some direct connection with rural or country life. However, research in other jurisdictions suggests that "local" visitors to rural regions are often attracted by service functions some agritourism

operations provide (e.g. dining experiences, farmers markets, events and festivals, as well as accompanying a visiting friend and/or relatives) (Fennell and Weaver 1997).

The real opportunity associated with BC's intra-provincial markets is linked to their high levels of access to the province and their ability to influence the travel patterns of the friends and relatives they are visiting. The lion's share of trips taken by BC residents in the province in 1999 involved visiting relatives (54%) or friends (39%) (CTS 1999).

3.1.2 Province-wide Resident Tourists

The broadest potential provincial market for agritourism is comprised of other BC residents. Their destination choice and trip planning decisions are based upon factors that include desired activity, heritage interests, service requirements, program offerings, distance, and time. About 60% of all BC travellers in 1999 were staying in destinations overnight (CTS 1999).

For the most part, such travellers are short-term visitors driven by recreation activity and social needs. Individuals in this segment are important because of their influence on the choices of their visiting friends and relatives.

Information from the BC Visitor Study 1995-96 databases identifies the travel characteristics of those BC residents who had visited a farm or winery during their travels. It is clear that few BC residents had actually visited a farm or winery as a part of their pleasure travels. Only 2.3 % of those residents surveyed in 1995-96 had actually visited a farm or winery on their most recent trip (BCVS, 1997). This share was greater (5.5%) for resident travellers going to the Okanagan region. This region accounted for approximately half of all leisure trips that included a winery or farm tour. The main characteristics of these BC agritourists are described in the following paragraphs.

3.1.3 Resident Agritourist Socio-Demographics

Resident agritourists tended to be baby boomer, fully employed males. The largest proportions of them had completed high school, and were living in middle income households (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Most Frequent Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Resident vs. Non-resident Agritourists

Characteristic	Residents	Non-Residents
Gender	Female (53.1%)	Male (54.1%)
Age	45-54 (25.0%)	35-44 (36.6%)
Highest level of education	Completed high school (35.0%)	Some college/university (30.0%)
Employment status	Employed full time (36.9%)	Employed full time (41.7%)
Total annual household income	\$40,000-\$60,000 (24.9%)	\$20,000 to under \$40,000 (31.2%)

Resident Agritourist Travel Philosophies

Resident agritourists especially believed in the value of spending money on travel. However, they also expressed particularly strong agreement about the need for this travel to not necessarily be expensive, and for it to be arranged by them to places with which they were familiar (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Resident vs. Non-resident Agritourist Travel Philosophies

Residents	Non-Residents
• I think money used for vacation travel is well spent • I do not have to spend a lot of money to enjoy a vacation • I enjoy making my own arrangements for my trips, rather than using a travel agent • I often choose vacation places that I have heard about from friends and relatives • I would rather take a number of short vacations instead of one long vacation	• I think money used for vacation travel is well spent • I do not have to spend a lot of money to enjoy a vacation • I like to have all my travel arrangements made before I start out on my trip • I enjoy making my own arrangements for my trips, rather than using a travel agent • I often choose vacation places that I have heard about from friends who have been there before

Resident Travel Destination Selection Factors

Overall, when selecting a vacation travel destination, resident agritourists placed greatest importance on choosing those places which provided them with opportunities to rest and relax; took good care of the environment; offered good value for their travel dollar; and were appropriate for their families (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Resident vs. Non-resident Agritourist Destination Selection Factors

Residents	Non-Residents
• Resting and relaxing • Visiting a place that takes good care of its environment • Getting value for the cost of the trip • Going to a place that is good for the family • Being physically active • Participating in outdoor activities • Learning new things, increasing my knowledge • Viewing wildlife and birds • Experiencing and seeing a mountain area • Visiting places with unique and interesting restaurants	• Visiting scenic areas • Travelling to places where I feel safe and secure • Experiencing and seeing a mountain area • Visiting clean cities and towns • Going to places with friendly and hospitable people • Having a variety of things to see and do • Visiting a place that takes good care of its environment • Getting value for the cost of the trip • Going to a place that is good for the family • Resting and relaxing

Resident Activity Patterns

While on their trips, agritourists pursued a wide range of activities. Incidences of participation in travel activities were most pronounced for pursuits such as visiting friends and relatives, dining out, sightseeing and shopping. However, large proportions of these travellers pursued other activities

such as photography, wildlife viewing and visiting historic sites, along with going to provincial and national parks (Table 3.4).

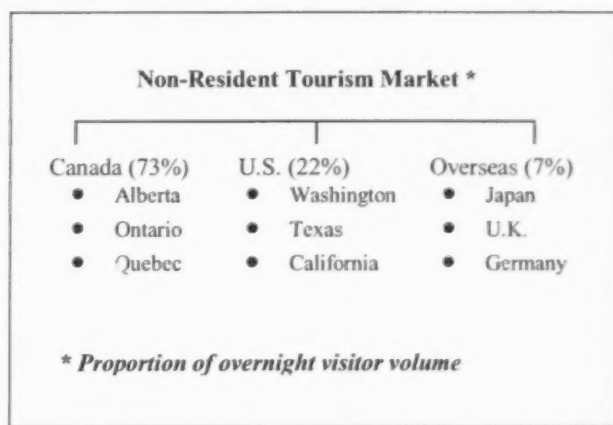
Table 3.4: Resident vs. Non-resident Agritourism Trip Activities Pursued

Residents	Non-Residents
• Visit friends and relatives (76.2%) • Dine out in restaurants (74.9%) • Go shopping (71.1%) • Go sightseeing (70.5%) • Do photography (50.7%) • Do wildlife viewing (44.8%) • Visit zoos, natural displays, gardens (39.5%) • Visit historic sites (34.1%) • Visit national and provincial parks (32.6%) • Go hiking or backpacking (27.0%)	• Sightseeing in the country (outside city/town) (95.1%) • Sightseeing in city/town (94.9%) • Shopping (92.5%) • Dining out in restaurants (90.2%) • Casual walking (89.1%) • Zoos, natural displays, gardens (83.6%) • Visiting National/Provincial park (81.5%) • Historic sites (78.5%) • Wildlife viewing/bird watching (69.1%) • Photography (66.8%)

3.2 NON-BC TOURISTS

Non-resident tourists are those people who live someplace other than the province of British Columbia and have the potential to visit the province. Generally, they are 'independent' travellers, although they may purchase a travel package on their own from a destination operator. The performance and motivating factors of non-resident tourists differ depending upon whether they are from Canada, the United States or overseas.

Cumulatively, travel to BC by non-residents is expected to generate about 53% of the overnight visitor volume and 74% of the overnight revenues to this province in 2001. US and Canadian (non-resident) segments are expected to generate about 45% of the overnight visits and 55% of the overnight revenues (BC 2000). In addition, other international overseas travellers are forecast to account for about 1.8 million overnight visitors which will represent 7.7% of the total overnight visitor volume and \$1.8 billion or 19% of the total overnight visitor revenues for the province. These market groups represent a very diverse mix of tourists. Each of these segments can be divided into smaller geographic segments for analysis purposes.



3.2.1 Canadian Non-Residents

Canadian Short-Haul

About 73% of all non-resident Canadians travelling to BC in 1999 were from Alberta. This represented about 1.7 million person trips to the province in that year (CTS 1999). When in BC, Albertan and other western Canada tourist needs are largely being met by trips to visit friends and relatives and visits to national or provincial parks. Little is known about their agritourism travel behaviour in BC. However, the tourism industries within Alberta and Saskatchewan offer agriculturally-related travel opportunities which serve as competitive products when Albertans consider a country vacation or agriculturally-themed event in British Columbia.

Non-Resident Tourist Market - Canada -

- Low agritourism penetration
- Museums
- Natural heritage
- Historic sites

Canadian Long Haul

The Canadian long-haul market (CLH) includes travel to British Columbia from primarily Ontario and Quebec. These two provinces along with other destinations in the rest of Canada accounted for about 22% of all overnight person-trips to BC in 1999 (TBCa 2001). CLH travel to farms in BC appears to have some growth potential. Visitors from these CLH markets appear to be quite interested in visiting museums and historic sites, which may provide an opportunity for linkage with agriculturally-related museums and historic farms.

3.2.2 United States Visitors

In 1999, The United States produced about 5.1 million overnight visitors for BC (TBCa 2001). This represented about 23% of the overnight visitor volume generated in the province. In 2001, BC is expected to capture about 25% of its non-resident market overnight visitor market from the United States. This represents an estimated \$2.5 billion or 26% of the total overnight revenues expected to be generated by non-residents in 2001. These American travellers will be either short or long haul visitors.

Little current information exists which profiles the behavioral traits of these travellers. While a recently conducted Tourism Attitude and Motivation Study (2000) commissioned by the province of Ontario and its partners could potentially provide useful information concerning the traits of these U.S. travel markets, such analyses have not occurred to date. Consequently, the following description of the market characteristics is based on more dated but probably still relevant print and data sources.

Non-Resident Tourist Market - United States -

- Low agritourism penetration
- "Explorers"
- "Heritage"

United States Short-Haul (USSH)

The USSH market for BC includes travellers from Washington, Idaho and Montana who can reach the province within 3 hours driving time. A Northern Tier Study (1994) indicates that BC agritourism related products and services probably match best with the needs of explorer and heritage travel segments found in those markets.

The explorer segment in that study accounts for 14% of the northern tier travelling population and 25% of travel by the northern tier to western/northern Canada. Their interests include climbing, hiking, biking, camping and viewing wildlife and nature. The heritage segment counts for 12% of the northern tier travelling population and 14% of trips by northern tier residents to western/northern Canada. Their interests include historic sites, museums and art galleries, and local festivals and crafts. These two segments show the greatest interest in meeting local people and exploring local cultures. They are interested in native culture and wildlife, and are also less likely to demand luxury hotels, nightlife, gaming and golfing. These preferences are consistent with agritourism and programs related to rural lifestyles. The greatest proportion of the explorer segment live in the west coast state of Washington, where their potential to visit BC is quite high. Indeed, Washington has a large recreational vehicle (RV) market comprised of seniors that are affluent and that travel longer distances, for longer durations and more frequently. This provides an opportunity for agriculturally-related soft adventure products in BC designed for the senior RV market.

United States Long-Haul (USLH)

The USLH segment accounts for a large share of overnight visits to BC. Key states from this market are Texas and California. The most prominent activities undertaken by tourists from the USLH while in Canada include sightseeing, dining at restaurants, shopping, visiting a national or provincial park, viewing wildlife or birds, and walking or hiking. Visiting a historic site or museum was an activity participated in by close to half of the respondents.

The family vacation market accounts for almost three-quarters of all vacation travel generated by U.S. residents (TIA 1996). This includes travel by couples as well as travel by a parent or parents with children (including single parent households and grandchildren with grandparent combinations). A major part of the family market, however, is couples without children. The key to marketing to this large segment is understanding that the demographics and characteristics of the American family are changing.

In addition, there is a large market of affluent Americans who have never visited Canada. This market can be broken into retired mature travellers, working middle-aged travellers, old baby boomers and young baby boomers.

- Retired mature travellers are the fastest growing segment in the United States. Social interaction is very important, as is concern for safety. They look for areas that are safe and healthy. They like to visit friends and relatives and spend time with their grandchildren.
- The working middle-aged market segment is the largest segment, and because of the aging of the baby boomers, will grow substantially in this decade. They look for quality more than price, and want life-enriching experience. They are more willing to try new products, however they are quite discerning about quality.
- The American baby boomers generally reside in the suburbs of large, metropolitan cities. A large percentage of older baby boomers are experiencing parenthood which affects their travel activities. The balance of younger baby boomers are either single, childless couples or couples with young families.

There are some potential matches for agriculturally-related tourism product development in BC associated with these affluent markets. Some of these travellers are interested in rural travel where they might participate in a combination of bicycling tours of rural areas, visits to fresh produce markets, trips to country festivals, and overnights in farm bed and breakfast accommodation. Such tourism experiences would meet their needs for learning about local cultures and heritage, taking part in safe but adventuresome and stimulating activities, and being provided with good quality accommodation and food services.

Table 3.5: Affluent American Travellers' Interests

Retired Mature Traveller	Working Middle-Aged	Baby Boomer
• Golf, walking, bird-watching • Soft adventure such as cycle touring, trekking, camping • Experiential tours such as botanical tours, winery tours • Historical and cultural city tours • Natural heritage attractions • Cultural tourism • Rural tourism • Short guided tours	• Hiking and walking • Bird-watching • Resort activities such as golf, tennis, and cycling • Photography • Recreation vehicle touring • Cultural activities • Antiquing • Shopping for arts and crafts • Outdoor and nature activities	Older Boomers • Wildlife, bird-watching and other soft adventure (nature oriented) • Shopping for arts and crafts • Cultural events and attractions • Visiting unique and less traditional destinations Younger Boomers • Jogging, cycling • Adventure trips (e.g. rafting, horseback riding) • Golf • Camping and hiking

(adapted from TIA, 1995).

3.2.3 Overseas Visitors

In 1999, overseas visitors represented about 7% of the total overnight visitor volume for BC (TBCa 2001). Approximately 8% of the total overnight trips and 19% of the total overnight revenues generated by non-residents for BC are expected to be derived from overseas visitors in 2001. The Asia Pacific Region is predicted to generate 911,000 overnight visitors while Europe is forecast to produce 691,000 overnight visitors for the province. Three of the largest sub-markets for BC from these regions are expected to be Japan (294,000 visitors), the United Kingdom (299,000 visitors) and Germany (155,000 visitors).

Non-Resident Tourist Market - Overseas -

- Low penetration
- Planned trips
- Value conscious
- Natural heritage
- Social interaction
- Family oriented
- Lots to do

Japan's travel market will represent about a third of all expected Asia Pacific region arrivals in 2001. The United Kingdom's travellers will generate around 43% of the total European overnight visitors in 2001. Germany (including Austria/Switzerland) is expected to account for about 22% of the total visitor volume coming from Europe to BC in 2001 (TBC 2001).

Market Potential

Specific market information concerning international travellers interested in pursuing agritourism is limited. However, considerable information about broader rural tourist market exists. It is assumed that a significant proportion of those travellers interested in rural tourism would also be interested in various types of agritourism activities.

Analysis of long haul market data from BC's top international tourism markets suggests that the potential interest and likelihood of participation in BC rural travel is most pronounced in Japan, followed by the United Kingdom and then Germany. Amongst the 16% of Japanese travellers interested in rural travel (3.9 million travellers), about 71% of them were interested and likely to visit Canada during the period 1995-2000. Market interest levels in rural travel amongst United Kingdom travellers (3.1 million visitors) and German travellers (4.4 million visitors) likely to visit Canada were 77% and 85% respectively. Table A-2 (Appendix 1) provides more detailed information on Canada's potential long haul rural pleasure travel market sizes from these three countries. As well the general travel motivations, socio-demographic, travel philosophy, travel product/activity advantages and trip characteristics of these travellers are summarised in the following sections.

Rural Tourist General Travel Motivations

All three rural tourist markets were motivated to travel by such factors as the availability of nice weather, outstanding scenery, a variety of things to see and do, and opportunities to increase their knowledge. Other factors served to differentiate them. For instance, unlike their European counterparts, the Japanese rural tourists placed more importance on having opportunities to relax and be entertained. UK rural tourists were particularly motivated to take low cost trips, while their German counterparts were especially interested in visiting places that provided opportunities to see wildlife (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: Rural Market General Travel Motivations (Top 10 Ranked Travel Motivations)

Japan	U.K.	Germany
• Outstanding scenery	⇒ Variety of things to see and do	♦ Opportunity to increase one's knowledge about places, people and things
• Variety of things to see and do	⇒ Opportunity to increase one's knowledge about places, people and things	♦ Variety of things to see and do
• Opportunity to increase one's knowledge	⇒ Personal safety, even when travelling alone	♦ Outstanding scenery
• Historical or archaeological buildings and places	⇒ Interesting and friendly local people	♦ Personal safety, even when travelling alone
• Environmental quality of air, water and soil	⇒ Nice weather	♦ Interesting and friendly local people
• Just relaxing	⇒ Standards of hygiene and cleanliness	♦ Destination that provides value for my holiday money
• Destinations that provide value for my holiday money	⇒ Destination that provides value for my holiday money	♦ Environmental quality of area
• Nice weather	⇒ Inexpensive travel within the country	♦ Historical or archaeological buildings and places
• Having fun, being entertained	⇒ Outstanding scenery	♦ Nice weather
• Standards of hygiene and cleanliness	⇒ Inexpensive travel to the country	♦ Chances to see wildlife, birds and flowers not normally seen

Rural Tourist Socio-Demographic Characteristics

On average, the largest proportion of these potential rural travellers tended to be married females, living in households with two members over 18 years of age, having no children at home, and earning mid-level incomes. When compared with potential rural tourists from the UK and Germany, the Japanese travellers tended to be younger, better educated, living in households with a single income earner, and less capable of communicating in English or French. Table 3.7 summarises the most frequent socio-demographic traits of each of these potential agritourism markets.

**Table 3.7: Potential Rural Travel Market Socio-Demographic Characteristics
(Most Frequent Responses)**

Characteristic	Market Origin		
	Japan	U.K.	Germany
Friends/Relatives Living In Canada	No (90.4%)	No (58.3%)	No (92.6%)
Friends/Relatives Living In The U.S.	No (74.6%)	No (61.0%)	No (78.4%)
Household Members < 18	None (63.6%)	None (67.1%)	None (77.8%)
Household Members 18+	Two (35.0%)	Two (54.0%)	Two (54.1%)
Gender	Female (58.3%)	Male (51.8%)	Female (53.7%)
Marital Status	Married (60.9%)	Married (62.9%)	Married (51.9%)
Age Grouping	25 - 34 years (23.5%)	35 - 44 years (24.1%)	45 - 54 years (19.0%)
Education Level	College/university graduate (36.8%)	CSE/Standard Grades/O Grades/O Levels/Lowers (20.1%)	Middle school (31.6%)
Occupation	Unemployed/non-working housewife/retired (28.2%)	White collar worker (32.2%)	White collar worker (33.5%)
Domestic Circumstances	Live with my parents (52.6%)	Family with children living at home (36.8%)	Live with spouse/partner with no children (29.8%)
Household Income Contributors	One person (47.0%)	Two (50.6%)	Two (51.1%)
Average Annual Income	7.0 - 9.9 million Yen (25.3%)	Less than £10,000 (16.2%)	DM 4,501 or over (46.1%)
English Proficiency			
Read	20.8%	n/a	59.0%
Write	13.2%	n/a	47.7%
Speak	8.7%	n/a	60.7%
French Proficiency			
Read	0.4%	23.6%	17.0%
Write	0.4%	16.7%	13.2%
Speak	0.4%	26.8%	17.1%
Credit Card	Visa (68.8%)	Visa (90.8%)	Eurocard (72.5%)

Rural Market Travel Philosophies

Despite country specific variations, the most important overall travel philosophies of these potential rural tourists were quite similar. For the most part, they were cost and value conscious travellers seeking new holiday destinations where they could flexibly select a range of travel experiences to pursue. They all placed high levels of importance on being able to make their own travel arrangements prior to and during the trip. Japanese rural tourists followed by their German and United Kingdom counterparts were more interested in pursuing trips of greater duration. Table 3.8 ranks the most important travel philosophies for these potential rural tourist markets.

Table 3.8: Rural Market Travel Philosophies (Top 10 Ranked Travel Philosophies)

Japan	U.K.	Germany
• Inexpensive travel to the destination country is important • Getting value for holiday money is very important to me • I like to be flexible on my overseas holiday • I like to have all my travel arrangements made before I start • For me, money spent on overseas travel is well spent • I like to go to a different place on each new holiday trip • When travelling overseas I usually take holidays of 10 days or less • I take holidays overseas whenever I have the means • I enjoy making my own arrangements for my holidays • It is important that the people I encounter speak my language	⇒ Getting value for holiday money is very important to me ⇒ I like to be flexible on my long-haul holiday going where and when it suits me ⇒ Inexpensive travel to the destination country is important to me ⇒ For me, money spent on long-haul travel is well spent ⇒ I like to go to a different place on each new holiday trip ⇒ I enjoy making my own arrangements for my holidays ⇒ I like to have all my travel arrangements made before I start out on holiday ⇒ I don't consider long-haul trips unless I have at least 4 weeks ⇒ I prefer to take extended holidays in warm destinations to escape winter ⇒ When travelling long-haul I usually take holidays of 14 days or less	♦ Getting value for holiday money is very important to me ♦ I like to go to a different place on each new holiday trip ♦ When travelling long-haul I usually take holidays of 14 days or less ♦ I like to be flexible on my long-haul holiday going where and when it suits me ♦ For me, money spent on long-haul travel is well spent ♦ I like to have all my travel arrangements made before I start out on holiday ♦ Inexpensive travel to the destination country is important to me ♦ Once I get to my destination, I like to stay put ♦ I enjoy making my own arrangements for my holidays ♦ I prefer to take extended holidays in warm destinations to escape winter

Travel Product/Activity Advantages

Perceptions of what advantages Canada had as a destination were fairly consistent for all three countries. Rural tourists emphasised the outstanding scenery and natural environment of Canada's mountains, parks, forests, lakes and rivers as being the country's biggest tourism assets. Table 3.9 summarises Canada's top ranked product/activity attributes as seen from the perspective of rural tourists from Japan, the United Kingdom and Germany.

Table 3.9: Rural Market Perceptions Of Canadian Tourism Product/Activity Attributes (Top 10 Ranked Attributes)

Japan	U.K.	Germany
• Outstanding scenery • Mountainous areas • National parks and forests • Wilderness & undisturbed nature • Lakes and rivers • Environmental quality of air, water, and soil • Visits to appreciate natural ecological sites • Chances to see wildlife, birds and flowers not normally seen • Wilderness adventures • Getting a change from a busy job	⇒ Lakes, rivers and mountainous areas ⇒ Outstanding scenery ⇒ National or provincial parks and forests ⇒ Visits to appreciate natural ecological sites like forests, wetlands, or animal reserves ⇒ Standards of hygiene and cleanliness ⇒ Chances to see wildlife, birds and flowers not normally seen ⇒ Environmental quality of area ⇒ Wilderness adventures ⇒ Opportunity to increase one's knowledge about places, people and things ⇒ Opportunity to drive around at my own pace	♦ Outstanding scenery ♦ Lakes, rivers and mountainous areas ♦ Visits to appreciate natural ecological sites like forests, wetlands, or animal reserves ♦ Hunting/fishing ♦ Opportunities to experience the country's unique identity ♦ Opportunity to increase one's knowledge about places, people and things ♦ Wilderness adventures ♦ Chances to see wildlife, birds and flowers not normally seen ♦ National, state or provincial parks and forests ♦ Variety of things to see and do

Rural Tourist Travel Patterns

On their most recent holiday, Japanese rural tourists most frequently took trips of 4-7 nights travelling with their spouse or significant other. They booked their trip shortly after planning it (within a month) and used brochures and pamphlets as their most important sources of information to help make these decisions. They tended to use travel in prearranged packages that included stays at mid-priced hotels, as well as opportunities to sightsee, shop and film/take pictures. In comparison, their European counterparts tended to take longer (15-28 nights), less packaged trips, and planned further in advance (6-11 months) with the help of travel agents. These potential rural tourists were also more apt to include sampling local foods on their itineraries (Table 3.10).

Table 3.10: Rural Travel Market - Most Recent Trip Characteristics (Most Frequent Responses)

Characteristic	Market Origin		
	Japan	U.K.	Germany
Total nights away from home	4 - 7 nights (43.1%)	15 - 28 nights (47.7%)	15 - 28 nights (45.9%)
Month in which trip started	September (14.7%)	n/a	n/a
Year in which trip started	1994 (62.5%)	n/a	n/a
Travel companions at start of trip	Wife/husband/boyfriend/ girlfriend (39.5%)	Wife/husband/boyfriend/ girlfriend (54.4%)	Wife/husband/boyfriend/ girlfriend (49.0%)
Time before actually decided to go on trip	2 months (32.9%)	6 - 11 months (31.9%)	6 - 11 months (21.5%)
Time before actually started to book trip	1 month (49.6%)	6 - 11 months (28.0%)	One month (28.9%)
Trip planning information source	Picked up brochures/pamphlets (60.5%)	Talked to a travel agent (59.1%)	Talked to a travel agent (67.4%)
Package usage	Yes (72.7%)	No (63.8%)	No (53.6%)
Accommodation usage	Mid price hotel (50.3%)	Mid price hotel (42.1%)	Mid price hotel (47.7%)
Activity participation (Top 3)	Sightseeing in cities (88.7%); Shopping (86.9%); Taking pictures or filming (82.5%)	Sampling local foods (89.4%); Shopping (87.3%); Informal/casual dining with table service (85.1%)	Sampling local foods (93.2%); Taking pictures or filming (90.0%); Shopping (86.6%)

3.2.4 Overall Non-BC Agritourism Market Profile

While the preceding discussion provides insights into the general traits of potential rural tourist markets, little detailed information on the characteristics of those non-residents who have actually visited BC farms and wineries is available. Consequently, more specific data available from the BC Visitor Study 1995-96 has been used to develop a more complete profile of non-resident travellers who have visited BC farms or wineries during their travels in the province. The following sections summarise market profile highlights of these non-resident travellers.

Non-Resident Agritourist Market Penetration

About 1.7% of all non-resident visitors surveyed in the 1995-96 BC Visitor Study had visited a farm or winery on their trip. The most frequently cited primary destinations for wine tourists were Kelowna/Central Okanagan (21%), Penticton area (11%), and south Okanagan (3%).

Non-Resident Socio-demographic Characteristics

Non-resident wine tourists tended to be relatively well educated, employed, late baby boomer males. Compared to other non-resident visitors, they tended to be younger, better educated, and less well paid (Table 3.1).

Travel Philosophies

Non-resident agritourists were most strongly in agreement with travel philosophies that supported spending money on travel, but within planned and value conscious guidelines (Table 3.2).

Destination Selection Factors

For non-resident agritourists, the most important reasons for selecting BC as a destination were related to opportunities to experience scenic and mountainous areas, meet friendly and hospitable people, visit family oriented destinations, as well as see and do a wide range of things (Table 3.3).

Activities Pursued

While travelling in the province, the vast majority of them participated in country and urban sightseeing (95%), shopping (92%), dining out (90%), and visiting natural displays and gardens (84%) (Table 3.4).

3.3 SPECIALTY AGRITOURISM MARKETS

In addition to the preceding geographic travel markets that might be interested in agritourism, there are an emerging set of niche or speciality markets that may have significant potential for farm operators and rural communities. These are as follows:

Specialty Agritourism Markets

- Agri-nursery/garden
- Agri-education
- Agri-exchanges
- General interest/training

3.3.1 Agri-Nursery/Garden Markets

Agri-business development is growing rapidly in some agricultural sectors of BC that may have affinities for tourism. For instance, the British Columbia Landscape Nursery Association (BCLNA) has commenced research into the development of "Garden Inspired Tourism". This initiative has arisen as part of a market development project designed to enhance BC's global image in relation to gardens. There is a virtual absence of Canadian garden tours on the international scene, yet market interest in such tours appears to be quite extensive.

Case Study: Butchart Gardens, Victoria – Gardens and More!

In 1904, the concept of Butchart Gardens began with an effort to beautify a worked-out quarry site on the 130-acre estate of Mr. and Mrs. R.P. Butchart. The landscape was transformed into a series of displays including a Japanese Garden, a Rose Garden, and a Sunken Garden. Besides these displays in spring and summer, there is entertainment including buskers, musicians and bands. There are many dining options available to tourists which range from cafeteria-style to high tea service. Summer evenings draw people for the illumination of the gardens and fireworks set to music. In the winter the Gardens feature a Christmas décor, light display, carollers, dining and shopping. Receiving almost one million visitors annually, Butchart Gardens has become one of the most famous display gardens and tourist attractions in BC (www.butchartgardens.com). This attraction has become a model for other nurseries and garden centres interested in expanding their products and services for tourists (e.g. gift shops, cafes, entertainment, children's activities, seminars and extended seasonal attractions).

3.3.2 Agri-Education

Agri-education is travel for the purpose of learning about specific components of agriculture, or agriculture in general. It can include travel related to public/high school programs, agricultural exchanges, and general interest/training. While some tours of this type exist in the province, the opportunity to more fully develop linkages between school students and farm operations is relatively untapped. Attracting student groups usually involves preparing a program and promoting it directly to the school decision-makers. Over the past four years, BC's Agriculture in the Classroom program has made significant progress in developing Tips for Tours of dairy farms, cattle ranches and most recently vegetable farms for students. One of the goals of the program is to promote awareness and understanding in BC schools of sustainable agriculture and food systems. Tips for Tours covers such topics as communicating with teachers, farms and food safety, as well as learning activities that can be conducted during and after the farm visit. These activities are linked to relevant curriculum at various levels in BC's public school system. (www.aipc.ca/bc)

3.3.3 Agricultural Exchanges

There are several agriculturally-related organizations that conduct student exchange programs around the world. The 4H organization has been active in arranging exchanges for many years. The National 4H office administers two national exchange programs: 4H Connections and the Inter-provincial Exchange.

3.3.4 General Interest/Training

This market niche is comprised of those individuals that have the potential to visit BC for an extended stay to participate in a formal or informal training program. It includes farmers and farm families from other countries that may be interested in learning about BC's farming techniques and approaches to farm management. Generating visits from these potential travellers requires partnerships with BC training institutions and ag-related businesses (e.g. universities, colleges and private training institutes) that deal with these training groups on a regular basis. Countries such as Japan have resources available for student and training groups to visit other countries.

Chapter 4

MARKET DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

4.1 MARKETING CHALLENGES

While considerable potential exists to develop agritourism markets in many regions, several issues must be addressed in BC before the full opportunity can be realised. These include the development of:

- marketing organizations and partnerships with the resources and talents needed to disseminate agritourism product information efficiently;
- monitoring procedures and measures to encourage the development of quality accommodation and catering facilities;
- strategic alliances between agritourism operators and other tourism suppliers providing regional rural tourism experiences;
- linkages between food producers and tourism operators to create innovative products;
- funding sources for professional and targeted product development and marketing;
- effective and systematic risk management and insurance programs; and
- tourism and business training programs for operators and employers.

4.2 INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IN BC

To address these challenges more support for BC agritourism is needed. Strategic alliances between industry and government are required to integrate agritourism with other rural and tourism development initiatives. The following sections describe current industry and government organizations which support agritourism in BC.

BC Based Industry Support for Agritourism

- Industry Support
- Farmers' Markets
- Tourism BC and Regional Tourism Associations
- Community Tourism Associations and Chambers of Commerce

4.2.1 Industry Support

The development of a viable agritourism or value-added processing industry depends on the on-going support of associations and government agencies. The following sections describe several industry organizations or associations that represent potentially strategic allies for emerging agritourism enterprises.

Direct Farm Marketing Associations (DFMA)

There are many advantages to purchasing farm fresh and value-added products directly from farms. Besides being assured of freshness and high quality, consumers can:

- See how the food is produced;
- Talk directly with the producers; and
- Learn how they are supporting their local economy.

Case Study: Vancouver Island Farmers' Alliance

The Island Farmers' Alliance (IFA) is a grassroots organization representing agriculture interests and farmers on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Its membership is comprised of farmers and organizations in all types of agriculture and food commodity groups. An important goal of the IFA is to support the growth and development of agriculture and the food industry on a regional level, through public education and promotional programs.

The IFA uses its logo and slogan ("Fresh From the Islands") to help the public readily identify local agriculture products, as well as farms and producers on the Islands. In addition, the IFA is reviewing existing policies and regulations with government and other related organizations to help stop the erosion of the Island's agriculture and food industries.

BC Direct Farm Marketing Associations

While many farmers pursue direct farm marketing, some have organized their approach through a regional association. BC Direct Farm Marketing Associations include the Southern Vancouver Island Direct Farm Marketing Association and the Fraser Valley Direct Farm Marketing Association. The Southern Interior Direct Farm Marketing Association is no longer registered as an official association, although it was suggested that there is still significant interest in a regional association despite some of the organizational difficulties faced by the original group.

On an annual basis, the associations publish guides that promote direct farm marketing and agricultural events. Maps show the location of farms listed in the guide, when products within a region are available, and where special events take place. Guides are distributed through a variety of means including newspapers, tourist information centres, chambers of commerce, regional ministry offices, farmers' markets, and participating farms.

Activities of direct farm marketing associations relevant to agritourism include:

- Promoting direct farm marketing for independent growers;
- Producing a directory which incorporates agritourism activities;
- Advancing agritourism by organizing special events;
- Working with tourism associations and other related groups to market farm experiences;
- Networking with association members concerning marketing initiatives; and
- Delivering education and training seminars related to marketing agritourism and other value-added products and services.

The two registered direct farm marketing associations in BC represent approximately 135 members. Examples of some of the 'best practices' these DFMA's have undertaken, in support of agritourism and value-added processing, are cited in the following paragraphs.

➤ *Southern Vancouver Island Direct Farm Marketing Association*

The Southern Vancouver Island Direct Farm Marketing Association (SVIDFMA) has been active for close to fourteen years. It has approximately 80 members. The Association publishes a yearly guide to promote farms and fresh products in the Greater Victoria area, the Cowichan Valley and on the Gulf Islands. As well as providing directional maps and comprehensive information about products and growing seasons, the guide describes farm-based visitor attractions. Listings include local farmers' markets, farm tours, major farm festivals, and fall fairs. For 2001, 160,000 guides were printed, 130,000 of which will be distributed through local newspapers. The remaining 30,000 will be distributed through a variety of means including farms stands, nurseries, bed-and-breakfasts, municipal and ministry offices, and at special events. The SVIDFMA maintains a website which has an electronic version of the guide and other information relevant to direct farm marketing. The website is updated monthly to ensure that information is timely and accurate (www.islandfarmfresh.com/).

Apart from the guide, the SVIDFMA's two main initiatives associated with agritourism are the *Saanich Fair Farmers' Market* and the *Tour of Farms* event. The Association has developed a unique partnership arrangement with the Saanich Fair Board that allows members to sell their products at the event with no exhibition fee. The expectation is that the farmers will incorporate an educational component into their displays and that they will avoid direct competition with concession venues. The SVIDFMA has developed a trophy to acknowledge the best display. This unique partnership allows small farms to participate and gain exposure in the marketplace. The Saanich Fair is a historic agricultural fair, running since the 1860s and drawing up to 50,000 visitors in recent years. The Saanich Fair Board recognises the value of having a farmers' market at the event. Visitors have commented that the educational farmers' market is a key highlight of the fair. In addition, the SVIDFMA plants and maintains a corn maze for the event.

The second initiative is the *Tour of Farms* event, which is a self-guided family tour of farms and farmland on southern Vancouver Island. This one-day event is offered free to the public with the intention to provide an educational, fun experience for visitors, and at the same time, to showcase local farms. A directional map and descriptions of the participating farms are displayed in a brochure which is distributed before the event. Contact information for a bus company is provided for those without vehicles. More than 20 farms participate in the *Tour of Farms* event, welcoming visitors and creating unique experiences for them. The 3rd Annual *Tour of Farms* is scheduled for July 8, 2001.

Case Study: Taste of the Islands

The *Taste of the Islands* festival is held at Oldfield Orchard and Bakery in Saanich, BC. Over this two-day event, consumers are invited to enjoy locally grown and processed Island food and beverage products. The event features an opening ceremony, food and beverage tasting, a petting farm, hayrides, and entertainment. In past years, over 4,000 people have attended this festival. .

Case Study: PumpkinFest

Le Coteau Farms and Garden Centre in Saanich, BC hosts *Pumpkin Fest*, an annual two-weekend event for the whole family. Le Coteau Farms features a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the year. *Pumpkin Fest* promotes the farm's four acres of pumpkins as well as other seasonal produce. The event incorporates food, entertainment, hayrides and corn mazes. Organizers publish and distribute a brochure of the event to inform visitors of yearly offerings and innovations. In addition to this event, Le Coteau Farms has diversified its operations by offering school tours, site rental space for private parties, and a small store stocked with farm products.

➤ *Fraser Valley Direct Farm Marketing Association*

The Fraser Valley Direct Farm Marketing Association (FVDFMA) produces an annual *Farm Fresh Guide* to help consumers find the products that they most enjoy buying from local farms. The Association maintains a website which has the *Farm Fresh Guide* in electronic format and other information relevant to direct farm marketing. The FVDFMA's guide is designed to provide regional information about farm products and family outings. The FVDFMA's membership is quite diverse with 55 member farms in 2001. The Association has been active for approximately eight years (<http://www.bc.farmfresh.com/>).

Case Study: A Taste of BC

The Fraser Valley Direct Farm Marketing Association and Minter Gardens showcase BC food and beverage products and producers in an event entitled *A Taste of BC*. Over the two-day event, consumers are invited to enjoy locally grown and processed BC food and beverage products. Minter Gardens' 27 acres of floral artistry are divided into 11 theme gardens. Interspersed among all of these gardens is a cross section of the best agricultural products from BC. This event offers an opportunity for consumers to learn more about the British Columbia food, beverage and nursery sectors. *A Taste of BC* has been running for two years with plans underway for a 2001 event.

Case Study: Cloverdale Produce

Cloverdale Produce exemplifies innovation and high-quality service in direct farm marketing. The operators have been growing fresh vegetables in the peat-rich farmland of Cloverdale for over fifty years. Carrots, onions, potatoes, lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, beets, peas, beans, artichokes, spinach, tomatoes, peppers, pickling cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, and corn are all grown on the farm. In addition to their own produce, Cloverdale Produce sells seasonal Okanagan fruit and local berries: cherries, nectarines, apricots, peaches, blueberries, raspberries and strawberries. At the *Cloverdale Produce Country Market* top quality products are sold (e.g. honey, jams, syrup, chocolates and crafts made by BC cottage industries). The operators provide farm tours, u-pick pumpkins, spring hanging basket seminars, and a massive 5-acre Maize Maze for their visitors.

<http://www.cloverdaleproduce.com>

4.2.2 Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets are emerging across the country as people come to connect with the land and meet vendors who have grown produce locally. These farmers' markets serve as a reliable sales outlet for growers and enable them to educate consumers about local crops.

Farmers' markets represent a community-based approach to direct marketing of farm and value-added products. In recent times, they have become agritourism attractions that draw visitors to rural communities across BC. They vary in size and development from large sheltered public markets to a few farmers with their trucks parked next to each other in a parking lot or field. The BC Farmers' Markets 2001 Directory, "Fresh From the Fields", lists 63 operating markets.

The BC Association of Farmers' Markets

This organization was incorporated in 2000. Its members develop and use farmers' markets. Key requirements for participation in the farmers' markets are that:

- the majority of vendors produce and sell BC farm products;
- the processed food products are made in BC with a majority of ingredients grown in BC;
- craft items are made in BC and where possible BC products are used; and
- the market must have at least 6 vendors and must operate for at least 2 consecutive hours for a minimum of 4 market days per calendar year.

Buy BC / BC Farmers' Market Program

The program provides marketing and promotional assistance for BC farmers' markets to increase consumer awareness and preference to purchase fresh, high-quality BC food products within their own communities. Under the program, a market is a place where vendors "grow, make, bake or raise" the products they sell (<http://www.buybc.gov.bc.ca/farmers.htm>).

Case Study: Lower Fraser Valley Farmer's Market

The Langley City Farmers' Market is open on Saturdays from May to October. The Market offers goods made/produced/grown in BC. These include produce, flowers, value-added products and works by artisans and craftspeople. The Market often features live entertainment associated with a variety of music styles such as flamenco, folk and pop. Pony rides are offered to children. Special events include a Strawberry Tea, Christmas-in-July Craft Sale, a Blueberry Festival, a Dunk Tank, an Antique Tractor Show, a Lawnmower Rodeo, a Pumpkin Pie Recipe Contest, and a Pumpkin Carving Contest on closing day.

Case Study: Duncan Farmers' Market

The Duncan Farmers' Market highlights the products and services of approximately 60 vendors from the Cowichan Valley Regional District of British Columbia. The Saturday morning market features local produce, baked goods, preserves, honey, nursery stock, bedding plants, crafts, free range turkey, emu, chicken, and hot prepared foods. Live entertainment and special events contribute to a festive, community atmosphere at this market.

Case Study: Prince George Farmers' Market

The Prince George Farmers' Market, initiated in 1994, has grown into a bustling market with 40-50 vendors. It is held every Saturday during the spring and summer seasons. Vendors sell potting plants, seeds, fresh farm produce, certified organic produce, baking and preserved goods, scented soaps, hats, crafts and much more. All goods sold are grown or crafted locally.

In 1998, fuelled by the success of the Prince George Farmers' Market, *Fresh From the Farm*—a farm product directory for Highway 16 farm operators, was created. The directory lists over 48 farms offering at least 60 farm products and services including agritourism events such as cowboy birthday parties, farm and herd tours, school tours, sleigh rides and agricultural fairs.

(http://farmcentre.com/bc/market_reports/vander/hwy16.htm)

The Comox District Farmer's Institute

The Comox District Farmer's Institute has been very active in promoting awareness of the challenges with sustaining agriculture growth on Vancouver Island. The Institute aims to communicate with and educate local politicians and residents of the Comox Valley about the issues facing the industry. It has been involved in agricultural education related to agritourism through programs such as 'Great Taste of the Comox Valley', 'Agriculture Week', Direct Farm Marketing Tours, Farmers' Market, and a 'Food for Thought Conference'.

There are also many other non-government organizations that also work to bring urbanites into contact with food production and environmental processes.

Case Study: Farm Folk/ City Folk

This not-for-profit organization promotes food security and public awareness of food sources. It provides a networking venue for discussion of agriculture, food, health and environmental issues. It has been involved in a variety of projects including the development to food policy, demonstration farms, support networks for community agriculture and the creation of community gardens.

(<http://www.ffcf.bc.ca>)

Case Study: Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust

This Trust was created to promote the environment and the benefits of farming, especially in the context of preserving farmland and wildlife habitats in the Lower Fraser Valley and Delta. It has operated community events designed to bring together people interested in preservation of wildlife habitat. The Trust also conducts farm stewardship programs via a set of tours, videos, brochures, fact sheets, and a newsletter "Farmland and Wildlife".

4.2.3 Tourism BC and Regional Tourism Associations

Tourism BC was established to support and promote the business of tourism in various geographic areas of the province. Its main function is to develop and implement marketing programs which will increase tourism traffic volumes and revenues to the province. The organization works with industry partners to develop products and services that meet the needs and interests of targeted travel markets. It focuses its programs on North American as well as select international markets. The programs include:

- a *Tourism Partners* program, which provides opportunities for tourism businesses to gain exposure through co-operative marketing programs conducted by the province's six Regional Destination Marketing Organizations. Opportunities for agritourism operators in this regard include print, radio, newspaper and magazine advertising, websites, participation in regional guides and other publications, and attendance at trade and consumer shows;
- a *BC Escapes* program featuring getaway products and packages with an emphasis on spring and fall travel experiences. Consumers interested can make reservations for these packages via a 1-800 HELLO BC telephone reservation and information service, or through the www.HelloBC.com website;
- a *New Products Bulletin* program which introduces new BC products to tour operators and travel industry personnel in key travel markets via a publication issued three times a year;
- a *Consumer Publications* program, which highlights travel opportunities and experiences in BC for travellers;
- a *Vacation Planner* program which highlights the six BC Tourism regions and directs consumers to the best resources for more detailed information on selected destinations and activities;
- an *Approved Accommodation Guide* program which promotes Tourism BC inspected and approved accommodations;
- an *Outdoor and Adventure Guide* program that provides comprehensive information on BC adventures ranging from guided tours to do-it yourself excursions;
- a *Sector Publications* program which promotes tourism sector associations to market their products (e.g. guest ranches) in conjunction with Tourism BC initiatives;
- a *Super, Natural British Columbia Reservation and Information Service* (1-800 HELLO BC) program which makes it easy for travellers to book their holidays via a centralized call centre, the Internet or through one of the province's Visitor Info Centres;
- a *Visitor Info Network* comprised of four Visitor Info Centres and partners, along with 111 community based information Counsellors;

- a *Tourism Product Database* which provides the information for the Tourism Product Guide. This guide is used as an information source for travellers using Info Centres, consulate offices and other tourism outlets;
- a *Training Services* program for providing a range of customer service workshops and training courses to tourism businesses and their employees;
- an *Industry Development Program* which directs its activities at helping industry operators effectively plan and grow their businesses. This includes a series of hands-on instructional seminars delivered as part of an on-going Road Show program; and
- an *Image Bank* program which provides professional quality imagery of BC to tourism operators for use in brochures and other promotional material. Several of the images highlight the province's rural and agricultural landscape.

Complementing Tourism BC initiatives are a set of community and regional tourism associations found throughout the province. Some of these organizations view agritourism as a tourism product that enhances and diversifies their existing tourism product mix. Their tangible support for agritourism varies depending on the area, the quality and quantity of agritourism products that are available, and whether or not the association has agritourism members in its organization.

Some of these associations are increasing their marketing effort in areas related to rural tourism in general and agritourism in particular. Examples of these initiatives follow.

- The *Okanagan-Similkameen Tourism Association (OSTA)* is one of the most active in its support for agritourism promotion. The Association has several members who are involved in agritourism related businesses. Through industry contributions OSTA has allocated marketing funds specifically to the agritourism sector. Agritourism is included in their overall regional product mix, within their regional travel guide, and has been prominently incorporated into their overall brand imaging process. In addition, the Association has worked with the Ministry of Highways to assist agritourism development in the region, by helping to create and promote a well signed wine route. The signs are branded with a common grape cluster logo.
- The *Okanagan Cultural Corridor Project* is an undertaking designed to increase tourism in the Okanagan Valley. It is doing this by encouraging new business partnerships and marketing initiatives among the Valley's cultural attractions: its museums and art galleries, historic sites and heritage attractions, aboriginal cultural attractions, arts and entertainment events, cultural festivals, agritourism attractions, wineries, and chefs. Working in co-operation with Tourism BC, the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association and other industry stakeholders, the Project will develop and market the cultural attractions of the Okanagan as a "corridor of cultural experiences" stretching from Armstrong to Osoyoos.
- The *British Columbia Wine Institute* represents all registered grape growers in the province of BC, who contribute to the Institute through payment of levies related to the amount of crop they process. The Institute co-ordinates marketing efforts which enhance the image of BC wines, and develops educational materials informing the public about these products. Past projects of the Institute include: restaurant promotions, wine festivals, the "Wine Route" touring program, promotional booklet "BC Wine Country", and the development of vineyard and winemaking training programs. In its most recent strategic planning program the BCWI identified wine tourism as one of its primary areas for market development (BCWI 2001).

Tourism BC's major marketing efforts in North America are directed towards the touring sector which includes vacations and getaway programs featuring sightseeing, attractions and cultural experiences often found in rural regions. Carefully developed agritourism products would match well with the intent of Tourism BC's touring strategy.

Tourism BC is also diversifying its portfolio of products associated with new outdoor and adventure pursuits, guest ranches, and other related niche products. It will encourage regional brand and destination development through continued support of the province wide Tourism Partners program. This program offers opportunities for the agritourism industry to partner on a collective basis in the marketing of agriculturally oriented attractions. Tourism BC has already incorporated several agricultural landscape images into its destination marketing initiatives. Opportunities to develop strategic alliances between direct farm marketing associations and Tourism BC should be developed. These alliances can be program specific and could be linked with Tourism BC's: Super, Natural British Columbia's Reservation and Information Service, Visitors Information Centres, Tourism BC website, Accommodations Guide program, and SuperHost Face to Face training workshops.

4.2.4 Community Tourism Associations/Chambers of Commerce

Many local Community Tourism Associations and Chamber's of Commerce support agritourism and value-added processing as business ventures contributing to general economic revenues and tourism traffic for local businesses. A number of chambers including Kelowna, Chilliwack, and Osoyoos have established agritourism sub-committees to address the challenges facing these industries, and to communicate various development concerns and opportunities to local municipalities.

Case Study: Chilliwack Agricultural Strategy

As part of its overall economic development strategy, The Chilliwack Economic Partners Association (CEPCO) established the Chilliwack Agricultural Commission. This Commission has worked closely with Tourism Chilliwack to define an agricultural development strategy which includes agritourism. Chilliwack intends to position itself as a centre of excellence in agriculture. It also plans to use its agricultural landscape, as well as arts and cultural heritage to attract agritourists and other rural travellers to the region. The provincial Land Reserve Commission has approved Chilliwack's strategy and is supporting the implementation of the plan and the development of agriculturally related tourism in this region.

(http://www.chilliwackpartners.com/News_and_Success_Stories/)

4.3 PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

A combination of both provincial and federal funding programs is available to support agritourism and value-added processing

Provincial Government Support

- BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Provincial Land Reserve Commission (LRC)
- Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture

development in BC. They are described in the following paragraphs.

4.3.1 BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

The BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' (MAFF) Agricultural and Food Performance Plan 2001/02 – 2003/04 launches a three year strategy based on three key priorities: industry development, resource management, and agriculture risk management. Of particular importance to agritourism is industry development.

The Performance Plan identifies goals that focus on capturing growth opportunities in emerging sectors and on maintaining the stability and growth potential of established sectors and regions. To that end, in partnership with the federal government, the Ministry announced the new Agri-Food Futures Fund on March 16, 2001. It is designed to help specified sectors such as agritourism organize themselves and develop 3-5 year strategic plans.

Buy BC

In 1992, the government of British Columbia committed to supporting the *BUY BC Program*, to increase consumer awareness and preference for BC food, fish, beverage and agricultural products within the province. The program, designed in consultation with industry, is administered by the Food Industry Branch, British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. The *BUY BC Program* encourages co-operative marketing initiatives that contribute economic benefits to the BC agri-fish-food industries. Cost-shared financial assistance is provided to support incremental generic marketing activities that meet market development purpose, objective, strategies and goals. *BUY BC Program* strategies include:

- Increasing awareness of BC food and beverage products among consumers and the trade;
- Building a unifying brand identity for BC products;
- Building on consumer preference for BC products over competitors and generating trade participation in promoting BC products, especially among major grocery retailers and food service operators. Buy BC Month which promotes BC's food and beverage industry is held every September.

Eligible applicants for Buy BC cost shared funding include food and beverage industry associations registered in the province and engaged in producing or processing BC food and beverage products. Examples of eligible applicants include commodity groups, councils, institutes, commissions, marketing boards and associations.

AgAware

AgAware BC was established in 1999. The program is a partnership initiative between the British Columbia Agriculture Council and the BC Investment Agriculture Foundation, with support from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. The program has a vision to make all British Columbians more aware of the importance of supporting agriculture in BC. AgAware recognizes agritourism as one means of achieving its objectives (www.agaware.bc.ca).

Buy BC Farmers' Market Sign Program

The Ministry of Transportation and Highways approved a highway sign program for British Columbia's farmers' markets in 2001. The Ministry will permit the placement of information signs for Farmers Markets on the highway rights-of-way (except freeways) to provide directional information to approved farmers' markets. This policy allows qualified organizers to apply for a permit to erect directional signs to markets that attract high volumes of traffic. The Buy BC Program pays up to 30% of the cost of the sign (<http://www.buybc.gov.bc.ca/signpolicy.htm>)

Case Study: BC Farmers' Markets Directory

Farmers' markets operate in communities across British Columbia. These markets vary in size and sophistication, from large sheltered public markets to a few farmers with their trucks parked next to each other in a parking lot or farm field. The British Columbia Farmers' Markets Brochure, from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, highlights 63 farmers' markets within BC. It provides location, dates, times and contact information for each market. The 27,500 printed brochures are distributed by tourism offices, the BC Chefs Association, some media centres, and at larger Farmers' Markets.

FBMInet-BC

The Farm Business Management Information Network for BC (FBMInet-BC) is an information technology project funded by the Canada/BC Farm Business Management Program and supported by Agriculture and AgriFood Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries. The project sources and develops practical farm business management information and presents this information through fact-sheets, publications and the FBMInet-BC website for use by British Columbian producers and other agricultural professionals. The FBMInet-BC website lists about 250 farm organizations involved in various commodity groupings. Each association has its own mandate but most of them participate in marketing programs that promote the specific agricultural commodities that their members produce. They are also active in providing industry development and education, as well as government advocacy activities for the benefit of members. These associations tend to support agritourism and value-added processing in peripheral ways.

Wine Industry Support

BC's wine industry received a \$200,000 grant in 2000, provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. The grant was intended to help promote wines from the Okanagan, Similkameen, Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island. It provided funds for point-of-sale materials, joint promotions with the food industry, wine festivals, and training programs for BC liquor distribution branch staff. The grant was intended to assist in building on the strengths of the wine industry and to expand consumer awareness of the quality of BC products.

BC Investment Agriculture

The BC Investment Agriculture Foundation was established in 1996 as a non-profit organization. It uses provincial and federal funding to help the agri-food industry in BC meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world economy. The Foundation's mandate is to help the agri-food industry adapt, diversify and grow. Its goals include:

- assisting the industry in capturing opportunities in the market place;
- fostering innovation and evolution as the basis for increasing the industry's competitiveness;
- strengthening the industry's contribution to rural development; and,
- developing co-operation, strategic alliances and partnerships across the industry for the benefit of the industry (http://www.agr.ca/policy/adapt/adaption_councils/british_columbia.html).

4.3.2 Provincial Land Reserve Commission (LRC)

BC regulates agriculture and related property issues in accordance with the *Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Act*. The *ALC Act*, passed in 1973, established the Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve and the Agricultural Land Commission (re-named the Land Reserve Commission) to manage and oversee the reserve. The Reserve created a store of land set aside strictly for farm use. The goal of this legislation is to prevent non-agricultural development of farmland and in doing so lend support to the continuation of operating farms (ALC 1998). The LRC is also active in sustaining the quality of agricultural soils through the administration of the *Soil Conservation Act*. These regulations have significance in the context of agritourism because they protect the agricultural resources that the industry relies on. At the same time, these regulations limit the type and scale of tourism facilities that can be established on agricultural land.

As recognition of the potential contributions that agritourism can make directly and indirectly to farm income, and, in the ways in which it encourages farming and fosters regional economic development, the LRC has developed the following general orders and policies over the past decade:

- ***1157/93 Bed-and-Breakfast Use in ALR*** - allows for bed-and-breakfast accommodation of up to 3 bedrooms in the main farm dwelling;
- ***726/95 Farm Retail Sales in ALR*** - allows farmers operating farm retail businesses to supplement sales of farm products with some processed farm products and some off-farm products providing specific conditions are met;
- ***997/95 Home Occupation Policy*** - is relevant to agritourism because the order allows for cottage industries (e.g. small-scale artisan galleries) to occur in the ALR under specific conditions;
- ***Agri-tourist Accommodation Policy*** - allows for small-scale accommodations on operating farms and ranches in the ALR under specific conditions (includes bed-and-breakfasts of 4 bedrooms and larger, guest ranches, farm inns and campsites); and
- ***276/2000 Wineries and Cideries in ALR*** - is the amended version of General Order #556/98, which required adaptation due to changes to the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*. General Order # 276 streamlines regulatory processes and encourages the development of wineries and cideries within the ALR. It does this by providing exemption to wineries from making application to the Commission for certain winery-related retail activities. The

thresholds provided in the General Order give winery operators and local government a clear understanding as to what level of ancillary, winery-related retail activity is permitted outright on a winery operation. The General Order also permits picnicking and wine consumption outdoors on a winery property as a separate endorsement. Winery and cidery tours and special promotional events are permitted provided that they are clearly ancillary, and related to the winery operation.

These changes are designed to provide greater certainty and clarity to potential investors and operators, while at the same time ensuring that agritourism operations are land based and supportive of BC farmers. According to the 1999-2000 LRC Annual Report, staff initiated research on emerging agritourism issues and distributed an agritourism and direct farm marketing survey to local governments. No new policy guidelines were developed in 1999-2000 specific to agritourism; however, it is anticipated that an updated policy or general order on agritourism will be developed in 2000-2001.

In addition, the LRC report *Farms and Forests for the Future: A Strategic Plan for BC's Land Reserve Commission* outlines how the Commission will continue its work in preserving the land base for the next five-year period (2000-2005). Strategic Directions 4 and 8 relate to agritourism policy and planning:

- **Strategic Direction 4** - demonstrates commitment to work with communities of interest to create an environment in which working farms can succeed, complementary with other users. The Commission recognizes that there are new opportunities emerging in tourism that could benefit rural resource areas. Providing opportunities for small-scale on-farm camping and bed and breakfast accommodation is one opportunity, especially in areas near existing and new provincial parks and protected areas.
- **Strategic Direction 8** - encourages diversification and value-added activities within the farm sector. Action steps include working with communities of interest in support of the objective to diversify and add value to primary products; reviewing Commission regulations, policies and General Orders to assess compatibility with diversification and value-added objectives; and developing specific methods, including regulatory changes, to encourage value-added activities such as processing, agritourism and agriculture projects on Reserve lands.

4.3.3 Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture

The Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture is responsible for policy and economic development services related to tourism. It has provided assistance to agritourism initiatives through funding and sponsorship of various educational seminars, events, and research programs. The Ministry has also been involved and sponsored events related to the development of agritourism in the past (e.g., Agri-Tourism Outlook 95 Conference, and The "Capture the Opportunity" conference in 1996).

The Ministry has initiated several programs and projects which may be useful in supporting future agritourism development activities. These include commissioning a series of Tourism Opportunity Studies (TOS) which can be used to identify, develop and promote sustainable forms of tourism around the province. For example, the baseline information on existing and potential tourism

products contained in such Tourism Opportunity Studies can be very useful in identifying and resolving issues related to access and use of resources by tourists and other users.

Another component of the Ministry's operations related to agritourism is operated by the Heritage Branch of the Ministry. Among other duties, the Branch is responsible for preserving, interpreting and presenting the Province's network of 29 Heritage properties to the public. The Kilby Store and Farm, and The Grist Mill and Gardens are two properties that highlight the historic role and significance of agriculture in British Columbia. In the process of their operations, they conduct a series of events and promotional activities that promote agritourism. These activities offer opportunities for strategic alliances between the Ministry and agritourism operators.

The Ministry's Heritage Trust provides management services for the BC Heritage Trust. Operating as a Crown corporation, the Heritage Trust supports community initiatives that conserve heritage and present significant dimensions of the province's history. It does this through a series of 14 Community Heritage Invest Programs. From an agritourism development perspective those programs which appear to be most suited to supporting heritage related projects include: Capital Development related to building and artifact conservation and Community Heritage Management related to conservation and feasibility plans.

The Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture has a number of programs targeted at the small business sector (ecp@tbc.gov.bc.ca). While many farm-based businesses would probably be too small to realistically utilise them, some larger agritourism businesses might be able to benefit from these programs. These programs are described in the following sections.

➤ ***Employee Share Ownership Program***

The program encourages employees to make equity investments in the companies that employ them. The program provides employee investors with a tax credit incentive.

➤ ***Community Venture Capital Program***

This program encourages BC residents to invest in BC small businesses located in regional communities pursuing economic renewal. The program enhances the existing Equity Capital Program and provides a tax credit to BC investors.

➤ ***Green Venture Capital Program***

This program encourages BC residents to invest in the province's small businesses engaged in environmentally friendly activities while providing economic benefit for BC. The program expands on the existing Equity Capital Program and provides a tax credit to BC investors.

➤ ***Equity Capital Program***

This program encourages private investors to invest in new and existing small businesses by offering a tax incentive to investors. Eligible small businesses under the program need to find investors for their venture but it does accommodate value-added production companies and a limited number of tourism businesses (destination resorts).

➤ ***Working Opportunity Fund***

This fund is administered by a labour sponsored venture capital company. It seeks investments in BC businesses that have high growth potential. It has primarily invested in technology companies to date but its eligible investments are similar to those for other equity capital programs.

4.4 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

There are a number of federal government programs available that are suited to agritourism businesses. A summary of the more relevant programs is provided in the following sections:

4.4.1 Canadian Rural Partnership Program

The Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP) is the key policy framework supporting federal rural policy efforts to date. It is funded by \$20 million over four years (1998 - 2002), and built around the Federal Framework for Action priorities. In BC, CRP activities focus on building partnerships, addressing priorities, creating dialogue, implementing pilot projects, and providing outreach in support of rural communities. An example of a Rural Team BC pilot project is the Sustainable Rural Tourism for the Southern Interior of British Columbia project (1999-2000). This pilot project is intended to support the creation of a four-season rural tourism industry built on environmental and heritage conservation principles (http://www.rural.gc.ca/team/bc/bchome_e.html).

Federal Government Support

- Canadian Rural Partnership Program
- Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative (CARCI)
- Agricultural value-added Loan Program
- Communities Future Development Corporation
- Farm Improvement and Marketing Cooperatives Loans Act (FIMCLA)

4.4.2 Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative (CARCI)

This federally sponsored program addresses needs of the agriculture and agri-food sector in such areas as agricultural production, marketing of agricultural products, food safety, research and development of new products and processes, and farm management. It complements the Canadian Rural Partnership program as well as other projects that are part of the Federal Framework for Action in Rural Canada.

The federal program was developed through consultations between industry and stakeholders. These consultations identified priorities for a renewed Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) program with greater focus on rural agricultural community development. CARCI-assisted projects are designed to complement other projects that respond to the needs of the agriculture and agri-food sector in such areas as agricultural production, marketing of agricultural products, food safety, research and development of new products and processes, and farm management.

4.4.3 Agricultural Value-Added Loan Program

This program is a jointly sponsored by Western Economic Diversification, the Farm Credit Corp. and CIBC. It provides loans up to a maximum of \$500,000 to Western Canadian companies involved in value-added food processing and non-food agricultural production businesses. Loans are for the final stages of research and product development, market development, pre-commercial development, commercial production and new processing capacity.

4.4.4 Community Futures Development Corporation

Community Futures Development Corporations are a key component of the integrated Western Business Services Network of Western Economic Diversification Canada. Their purpose is to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being of BC communities. Because agriculture is one of the major rural resources, Community Futures Development Corporations have been instrumental in helping many small farms find new and innovative ways to market their products. Loans from these corporations can assist farmers in setting up processing operations, roadside stands and agritourism facilities.

Several Community Futures organizations actively support agritourism and value-added processing businesses. They provide preliminary and general business counselling as well as technical assistance in the development of business plans and financial proposals. Since the project first was launched in 1998, it has helped over 300 producers across BC to market and distribute their products. The region's producers came from as far away as Munch Lake, which is 730 kilometres north of Dawson Creek, and as close as Pouce Coupe, south of Dawson Creek. Some of the goods produced include furniture, a wide assortment of wood products, pottery, quilts, jewellery, soaps, jams, honey, seasoned oils, spices, clothing, candles, greeting cards, and cookbooks.

4.4.5 Farm Improvement and Marketing Cooperatives Loans Act (FIMCLA)

The Farm Improvement and Marketing Cooperatives Loans Act (FIMCLA) is a federal government program designed to increase the availability of loans for the purpose of the improvement and development of farms and the processing, distribution or marketing of farm products by co-operative associations. Under the Act, the Ministry is liable to pay to the lender 95% of a loss sustained as a result of a loan made, provided that the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have been met. Established in 1988, FIMCLA has helped more than 130,000 farming operations grow their businesses by guaranteeing loans through lending institutions.

The Act and the Regulations collectively are generally referred to as the Farm Improvement and Marketing Cooperative Loans Program. Guidelines have been designed to assist lenders in the interpretation of the Act and the Regulations, and in the delivery of this program. If a discrepancy arises over the meaning or interpretation of items, the legal interpretation of the Act and Regulations will take precedence.

Lenders are expected to take the same care in making FIMCLA loans as would be taken in conducting ordinary business. The program has been designed to enable lenders to incorporate its administration into their normal routine of business while providing government guaranteed loans to farmers and farm co-operatives.

Chapter 5

BC AGRITOURISM INDUSTRY CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Many BC farmers are currently involved in or are considering the use of agritourism as a means of diversifying their farm operations. How they will accomplish this is the challenge. The full growth potential for agritourism can only be achieved if strategies to address their challenges are developed and implemented. The following sections identify these overriding challenges and recommend strategies to address them.

5.1 AGRITOURISM INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

While the number and diversity of agritourism and value-added businesses are growing in the province, there is limited recognition of its development potential. Support varies significantly between regions. The Direct Farm Marketing Associations and Agricultural Commodity Group Associations have played a significant role in enhancing the viability of the agritourism and value-added processing sector. Those farmers who are involved with agritourism activities can also become members of regional tourism associations in order to participate in broader tourism marketing initiatives. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is currently the primary government agency providing agritourism support, followed by assistance from the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture.

BC Agritourism Industry Challenges and Strategies

- Agritourism Industry Recognition
- Supportive Agritourism Policies and Regulations
- Supportive Agritourism Financing
- Effective Training Programs
- Liability and Risk Management Programs
- Product and Service Quality Control
- Strategic Partnership Development
- Marketing Programs
- Conflict Management Programs

5.1.1 Recommended Strategy

Establish a Provincial Agritourism Council (PAC) as the body responsible for co-ordinating product development, marketing and training for all agritourism initiatives in BC. The primary mandate of the PAC should be to address the key issues identified in this report. This Council should be comprised of a combination of government and private sector agricultural and tourism representatives from across the province who will guide the PAC in its strategic activities. The Council members should be selected based on their familiarity with product development and marketing tactics in their respective sectors. They should also have a demonstrated commitment to building strategic partnerships between agricultural and tourism operations.

The ongoing funding of the PAC should be derived from a combination of government and private sector sources. After initial start-up government funding support (e.g. 3-5 years) for the PAC, a public – private sector matching fund formula for the sustained operation of the Council should be established. Revenues for the private sector portion of this funding should come from agricultural associations, agritourism operators, food processing companies and distributors, and tourism operators using agricultural attractions as portions of their product portfolios.

5.2 SUPPORTIVE AGRITOURISM POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

A broad range of policies and regulations affect the operations and viability of most farm operations. The main policy and regulation challenges facing the agritourism industry are as follows:

- at all government levels there is a lack of understanding concerning how existing regulations and policies impact agritourism operations;
- policies and regulations with respect to the appropriate size of facilities and the use of land for agritourism activities and parking are too restrictive and economically unfeasible to implement;
- policies are perceived to be developed without consultation with farm operators and without an analysis of the potential impacts on agritourism operations;
- there is a lack of consistency in regulation interpretation by government administrators; and
- there is limited awareness and understanding of existing agritourism policies and regulations amongst farmers. As well, many farmers are unaware of how to obtain information on these regulations and how to apply them to their specific operations.

5.2.1 Recommended Strategies

The PAC should initiate programs which increase awareness and understanding of the implications of existing policies and regulations amongst governments and farmers. The following are possible strategies for increasing overall awareness and understanding of these policies and regulations.

➤ ***Identifying an Advocate for the Industry***

The PAC should be the primary advocate for the development of appropriate agritourism and value-added sector policies and regulations in the province. It should lead initiatives that support the development of more effective and useful regulations, as well as the realistic interpretation of those guidelines.

➤ ***Working With Government for More Effective Regulations***

The PAC should conduct workshops with government agencies (e.g. ministries, regional districts, municipalities, Land Reserve Commission, etc.) to encourage the development of effective agritourism policies and regulations, as well a consistent interpretation of their intent. These workshops should address:

- methods of insuring a consistent and clear interpretation of existing regulations affecting the availability and continuity of financial support for these farm operations;
- tactics for the communication of information concerning appropriate forms of farm operations as defined by the BC Agriculture Assessment Authority and the Land Reserve Commission;
- approaches for increasing awareness amongst regulators about the impact of existing regulations on the long term viability of farm operations;
- methods for streamlining the implementation of policies and regulations which relieve legislated burdens that are currently confronting farmers;

- methods for ensuring that government agencies consult with farm operators in the development of new policies and regulations;
- methods for developing, maintaining and communicating information (e.g. print or on-line manual or directory) of all relevant rules and regulations for agritourism. Included in this manual or directory should be a list of advisory contacts who could assist other farmers in their interpretation of these policies and regulations; and
- methods of providing "primer" programs to farmers wanting to develop agritourism and related value-added businesses or to those existing farm operators who want to be updated on the regulations and policies.

Case Study: Getting Through the Maze

Although the agritourism operator faces many regulatory and policy requirements, the District of Chilliwack has produced a tool to help operators through the maze of government bureaucracy. In January 2001, Tourism Chilliwack and the Chilliwack Agricultural Commission (a division of the Chilliwack Economic Partners Association, CEPAC) and the federal department of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), jointly produced the booklet, "Agritourism and Rural Recreation: A Resource Workbook for Businesses in the Chilliwack Area". It is meant to be an all-encompassing, user-friendly reference for new and existing agritourism businesses. The 'how-to' booklet provides guidance in areas such as marketing, insurance, health and safety regulations. Critical municipal, regional, provincial and federal regulations and policies are laid out clearly, along with contact and resource information. The purpose of the booklet is to supplement the face-to-face assistance that Tourism Chilliwack, the Chilliwack Agricultural Commission and the HRDC provide agritourism operators.

(Tourism Chilliwack and the Chilliwack Agricultural Commission 2001).

5.3 SUPPORTIVE AGRITOURISM FINANCING

Some agritourism and value-added processing enterprises can be launched with very little money while others will require significant financial support. The main challenge for agritourism operators is accessing funds provided by financial institutions. The challenge exists because:

- there is a lack of farmer awareness of how to approach financial institutions;
- there are problems obtaining the necessary "equity" position to acquire funding;
- financial institutions have limited awareness of the value and benefits of the agritourism and related value-added processing and are often reluctant to support funding in these sectors; and
- within the farming community, there is some intimidation about applying to financial institutions for agritourism funding.

5.3.1 Recommended Strategies

The PAC should be proactive in obtaining financial support for agritourism and value-added processing businesses. It should educate farmers about the types of financial assistance programs available and the procedures required to apply for such support. It should undertake the following strategies:

➤ ***Create Effective Relationships Between the Farm Owner and Financial Institutions***

There is a need to educate financial institutions about the value and benefit of the sector to agriculture and tourism businesses. Using this document's findings as a foundation, the PAC should initiate an awareness campaign that increases understanding of the agritourism sector within the financial community. In addition, the PAC should organize workshops that build relationships between farmers and financial institutions. Such workshops should address topics such as:

- agritourism related funding programs available from financial institutions. Numerous existing programs can assist farmers in expanding their business opportunities (Table 5.3). Each of the programs is unique in its source of funds and application requirements;
- capital and economic performance requirements of lending institutions; and
- development of effective business plans.

Case Study: European Agritourism Initiative

The European Union, through its Objective 5b Program (1994-1999), provided funds for six rural areas in need of economic regeneration. Eligible farmers in these rural areas were able to obtain capital assistance for new agritourism developments or the upgrading of existing facilities. The program also provided financial assistance for marketing, business development and training targeted at farmers. Funding had to be matched by similar investments from these farmers, private sector partners and other participants. Capital projects ranged from guest accommodation and leisure attractions to farm shops and craft centres.

Hardcastle, S. (1997). *Caterer and Hotelkeeper*.

Table 5.3 Sources of Start-up Capital For Agritourism and Value-added Processing

Program	Funding Organization	Purpose	Intended Applicant	Amount	Terms	Contact
Agricultural Value-added Loan Program.	Western Economic Diversification Canada, Farm Credit Corporation and CIBC.	Loans are made for businesses involved with the processing of food or non-food agricultural products, or related research & development, new production capacity and new market development. Require a commercially viable product and a solid business plan.	Small and medium sized business operating in BC, Alta., Sask. or Man. Fewer than 250 employees. Less than \$20 million in annual sales.	Minimum of \$50,000 to maximum of \$1 million.	Patient debt Flexible terms. Up to 10 year repayment schedule.	Western Economic Diversification Canada Office. In BC phone 604-666-6256 or 1-888-338-9378 www.wd.gc.ca
Tourism Industry Loan Fund.	Western Economic Diversification Canada and Business Development Bank of Canada.	The program is focused on, but not restricted to, heritage, eco-tourism, food services, transport services, guide/interpretative services or outdoor tourism including management and staff training. Require a commercially viable product and a solid business plan.	Small and medium sized businesses operating in BC, Alta., Sask. or Man. Fewer than 100 employees. Less than \$5 million in annual sales.	\$25,000 to \$250,000 per project.	Bank of Canada base interest rate plus a variable increment (3-5%) depending on risk. Up to 8 year repayment schedule.	Western Economic Diversification Canada Office. In BC phone 604-666-6256 or 1-888-338-9378. www.wd.gc.ca
Community Futures.	Western Diversification Canada.	To assist community-based economic development.	Applicants approach the regional Community Futures Dev. Corp. in their area with a business proposal.	Up to \$125,000. (Typical loans are in the order of \$22,000).	Bank of Canada base rate plus 2-3%. 2-5 year repayment schedule	Regional Community Futures Office.

Table 5.3 Sources of Start-up Capital For Agritourism and Value-added Processing (continued)

Sources of Start-up Capital						
Program	Funding Organization	Purpose	Intended Applicant	Amount	Terms	Contact
Women's Enterprise Initiative.	Western Diversification Canada.	Intended for any business venture with the exclusion of investment in real estate, stocks and shares.	51% female staff. Female owner-operator who is a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant living in BC, Alta., Sask., or Man.	Minimum loan of \$2,000. Maximum loan of \$100,000.	Bank of Canada base rate plus 2-4%. Payback period depends on business plan.	Western Economic Diversification Canada Office. In BC phone 604-666-6256 or 1-888-338-9378 www.wd.gc.ca.
Micro Business program.	Business Development Bank of Canada.	Mentoring and funding geared to candidates with good potential.	Business with strong growth potential, management capabilities, competitive advantage and basic financial criteria in place.	\$5,000 to \$25,000 for start-up capital. \$5,000 to \$50,000 for existing ventures.	3-6 year repayment schedule.	Any branch of the Business Development Bank of Canada. 1-888-463-6232. www.bdc.ca
Innovation Loans.	Business Development Bank of Canada.	Mentoring and funding to help innovative businesses position themselves to take advantage of new markets and new technology.	Any small to medium sized company with growth potential, a solid business plan and a viable strategy.	Up to \$250,000.	Payback period depends on business plan.	Any branch of the Business Development Bank of Canada. 1-888-463-6232. www.bdc.ca
Small Business Loan Program.	Toronto Dominion Bank.	Loans to assist with purchase, improvement or expansion of business assets.	Profitable businesses; loan secured by a charge against the asset being financed.	\$10,000 to maximum of \$50,000.	Fixed or floating rate. 1-5 year term; 20 year amortisation.	Any branch of the Toronto Dominion Bank. www.tdbank.ca
Farm Improvement Loan. Operates under federal government's FIMCLA.	Toronto Dominion Bank; CIBC; ScotiaBank.	Federal government guaranteed funding to provide medium to long-term assistance to farmers for improvements and expansion of farms.	Canadian farmers and farm co-operatives.	Up to a maximum of \$250,000 or 80% of purchase price (for individual farmers)/\$3 million for coops.	Preferred interest rate if qualify under FIMCLA. Fixed or variable rates.	Any branch of the Toronto Dominion Bank or CIBC. www.tdbank.ca www.cibc.com/ www.scotiabank.com

Table 5.3 Sources of Start-up Capital For Agritourism and Value-added Processing (continued)

Sources of Start-up Capital						
Program	Funding Organization	Purpose	Intended Applicant	Amount	Terms	Contact
Self-Reliance Loan.	VanCity Credit Union.	A loan program for new or expanding businesses based on character and credit history.	Must be a VanCity member in good standing for at least 6 months or enrolled in the Self-Employment Benefit program and be willing to act as a mentor to other borrowers. Can operate anywhere in British Columbia.	Maximum loan \$25,000.	Interest rate is prime plus 4%.	Any branch of VanCity Credit Union. Phone: 604-877-7000. www.vancity.com
	VanCity Community Foundation.	A loan fund that supports individuals and organizations to adhere to community economic development principles.	Must be an organization or be an individual that is at least 19 years of age who resides and /or operates in the Lower Mainland or Fraser Valley.	Maximum for individuals is \$5,000. Loans to non-profit societies are in the range of \$30,000.	Interest rate is current market rate. Repayment amounts, terms and schedules are flexible.	Any branch of VanCity Credit Union. Phone: 604-877-7000. www.vancity.com
Maple Ridge Community Credit Union.	A full range lender.	Open but preference to established credit union member.	Provides a full range of lending and deposit services to meet the needs of business in the community.	Various.	Various.	604-466-2200.
Access to Capital for Business Start-Ups.	National Bank of Canada.	General financing based on specific circumstances.	Management with proven experience in the industry, well-capitalized, acceptable industry and business plan.	Depends on merits of the application.	Based on merits of each application.	National Bank of Canada, Commercial Lending Centre. 604-661-5511.

➤ ***Provide Information to Assist in the Application Program***

In order to access financial assistance, farm owners are required to develop effective business plans. These business plans need statistical information on the markets for agritourism and value-added products, as well as industry norms concerning expenses and revenues. The PAC should monitor initiatives that have been recommended in this report. Additional surveys should be conducted on a 2-5 year basis to provide time series information on the growth of the sector.

Marketing information is also required. This report provides a foundation of market information concerning agritourism travellers. However, more current information from emerging studies (e.g. Tourism Attitude and Motivation Study 2000) is needed. The PAC should work with the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture to obtain more information which profiles travellers interested in agritourism. As well, a standardised on-site

visitor survey could be conducted on an industry wide basis, with the implications of the findings presented in annual or semi-annual PAC workshops.

5.4 EFFECTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Adding even a small agritourism or value-added processing business to an existing farm operation may require more time and attention than expected by farmers. The ability to train and properly manage good employees is critical to success. Tapping into existing training opportunities that relate to customer service and marketing as well as tourism business management practices is required.

5.4 1 Recommended Strategies

➤ *Encourage Effective Hiring Practices*

The PAC should establish and implement training programs dealing with hiring employees, customer service, business plan development and marketing. Information sources such as those produced for the *Opportunity Analysis for Farm-Based Businesses* study provide a good start for the development of such training programs. Examples of existing manuals and training programs that might be adaptable to BC's agritourism industry include:

- Tourism BC's Training Services program which provides a range of customer service workshops and training courses to tourism businesses and their employees (e.g. Superhost Fundamentals, Service Across Cultures, Customers with Disabilities, Japanese Service Expectations, Service in Health Care, Frontline Management Solutions);
- Tourism BC's Industry Development program which provides industry members with a range of training materials (e.g. Tourism Business Essentials) and was designed to help tourism industry stakeholders plan and expand their businesses;
- *Agri-Tourism: Looking at New Horizons* is a booklet for farm and agribusiness managers which can be ordered from the Ontario Agricultural Training Institute (416-485-3677) or e-mail: infooati@oati.com. The 45-page booklet sells for \$19.80 which includes GST and shipping;
- CIBC offers *Farm Business Planning Guides* with helpful information and financial planning and management worksheets to help farmers plan their business more efficiently and profitably. The Guides help to organize and record past accomplishments, as well as to present resources and commitments. They are also helpful in applying for a CIBC line of credit, and in developing yearly budgets. Visit any CIBC branch or email agdiv.cibc@sympatico.ca to get a copy;
- CIBC also offers a *Farm Financial Analysis System* (FFAS), a software program based on the *Farm Business Planning Guides*. The program tracks a farm's debt servicing ability, net worth, and income over time. It can also help identify and analyse trends, financial ratios, and the overall performance of a farm. Visit any CIBC branch or email agdiv.cibc@sympatico.ca to get a copy;
- Royal Bank's publication *The Agriculture Business Review* offers insightful, benefit-driven articles on a variety of business and financial management topics. It is published five times

a year to provide information, ideas and solutions for farmers and agribusiness in Canada (<http://www.royalbank.com/business/publications.html>);

- Scotia Bank offers a free tool called the *Scotiabusiness Plan Writer*, which can help small businesses put financial business plans together; and
- Canada Business Service Centre (www.cbsc.org) is a premier on-line gateway to government information for businesses. Links include information guides, business start-up assistance, interactive business planners, on-line business workshops, and more.

Case Study: AussiHost Training System

AussiHost is a training system aimed at stimulating better service in business. Supported by the Inbound Tourism Organization of Australia, and sponsored by the Department of Tourism, Qantas and the Australian Tourist Commission, it is a professional training course suitable for operators and staff on farms. Its objectives are to help develop better communication skills; enhance confidence; achieve greater job satisfaction; create greater awareness of customer needs and expectations; and provide better customer service. It helps develop customer-service skills.

www.wrc.dynamite.com.au/training/aussie.htm

5.5 LIABILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

When farmers invite customers on to their land and encourage them to purchase products and services, they are obligated to take measures to insure that no unreasonable harm occurs to their customers. This liability also applies to farmers who may be renting or leasing land and facilities. The extent of farmer liability depends on the status of the visitor, but it is normally greatest for public and/or business 'invitees'. All BC farmers involved with agritourism should develop and use a comprehensive farm risk management and liability protection program.

In BC, the key challenge related to liability management is the high cost and availability of liability insurance. As a result, some farm ventures may operate without appropriate liability insurance, leaving the farmer at significant risk. Farmers need a stronger understanding of why risk management programs are needed and how such initiatives can help to reduce insurance costs.

5.5.1 Recommended Strategies

➤ *Encourage Adoption of Risk Management Programs*

The PAC should play a leading role in encouraging agritourism operators to develop and implement effective risk management programs which clearly identify the benefits of risk management programs and the steps required to establish safe visiting environments for tourists. It should disseminate this information through agricultural meetings, workshops, and print materials.

Case Study: Insurance Alliance

A partnership between the BC Farmers' Market Association and Co-operators Insurance has evolved which allows members of the BC Farmers' Market Association to access general commercial liability insurance (up to \$2 million) at a significantly discounted rate. As well as insurance coverage for vendors at farmers' markets, insurance to protect private property can be purchased at a discounted group rate as long as membership within the Association is valid.

5.6 PRODUCT AND SERVICE QUALITY CONTROL

Like many other consumers, travellers visiting farms are also concerned with getting good value for their money. Consequently, it is important to strive for the highest product and/or service quality that can be delivered. This should happen on a consistent and on-going basis. The challenges facing the agritourism industry with respect to the delivery of a quality products and service are:

- information on traveller expectations of agritourism product quality;
- awareness of the benefits of meeting expectations for product quality standards; and
- awareness of appropriate pricing and its relationship with quality standards.

5.6.1 Recommended Strategies

➤ *Establish Quality Standards*

For agritourism in BC to be credible, specific efforts should be placed on developing a quality standards system. These are standards which should guide general business requirements (i.e. meeting health standards) as well as relate to customer service and products sold.

Several of BC's tourism businesses have developed various "Codes of Conduct" which are promoted by tourism organizations such as the BC Fishing Lodges and Guide Outfitters association. These voluntary guidelines provide examples of operating principles which could be adapted by agritourism operators. In addition, Tourism BC offers opportunities for tourism related businesses to attain recognised quality product standards. For instance, it operates a province-wide SuperHost business designation program. Achievement of this designation for quality service is accomplished by having 60% or more of a tourism businesses' employees participate in one or more SuperHost workshops. Similarly Tourism BC's Approved Accommodation Guide Program provides a standard for quality control of lodging facilities. From an agricultural perspective, quality product control occurs in a variety of ways, but those most related to the needs of tourists include the wine sector's Vintner's Quality Assurance program and Buy BC products, both of which provide a measure of quality control and recognition for the industry.

➤ ***Encourage the Use of Quality Standards***

The key to ensuring the effectiveness of this initiative is training and awareness of what constitutes a quality product. The PAC in association with agritourism operators should develop a code of conduct associated with the delivery of agritourism products and services. As part of the establishment of quality programs, an industry based assessment program to audit quality of on-site safety and health activities on farms could also be developed. The Sonoma County Farm Trails program is a potential model for such an assessment program.

Case Study: Farm Accommodation Standard Programs

Since 1966 in France, farm guest accommodations (gites) have been rated using symbols of ears of corn (epis) to indicate the standard of the dwellings. Each gite must have certain basic features. Points are given for higher ratings attainable on the basis of such things as the efficiency of the heating system, architectural features, style of decoration, the site, environment and possibilities for leisure activities. The system is designed to encourage owners to maintain and improve the attractiveness of their properties. This rating system affects the rent operators can charge.

Case Study: The Ten Commandments of Good Service

1. **Guests** are the most important people in any business.
2. **Guests** are not dependent on us - we are dependent on them.
3. **Guests** are not an interruption of our work - they are the purpose of it.
4. **Guests** do us a favour when they call - we are not doing them a favour by serving them.
5. **Guests** are part of our business - they are not outsiders.
6. **Guests** are not cold statistics; they are human beings with feelings and emotions like our own.
7. **Guests** are not to be argued with.
8. **Guests** are those who bring us their wants - it is our job to fill those wants.
9. **Guests** are deserving of the most courteous and attentive treatment we can give them.
10. **Guests** are the lifeblood of the farm and ranch recreation business.

Oregon Department of Agriculture. (1996). *Farm and Ranch Recreation Resource Workbook*. Salem OR. May 1996. p. 3.

5.7 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Wherever a mutual benefit can be found, businesses should attempt to capitalize on the advantages of creating productive partnerships. Some partnerships are formed among similar tourism or value-added processing businesses and interested government agencies. This often occurs in order to pool their resources for a common goal. Others may be formed to reduce risk, co-op competition, create economies of scale, improve market coverage, improve market image, or to trade information or products in exchange for expertise. The Canadian Tourism Commission has encouraged the development of strategic alliances through its Product Club program. The program has brought small and medium sized businesses together to create strategic alliances in tourism sectors related to

festivals and events, skiing and snowboarding, golfing, bed and breakfast accommodation, ecotourism, health spas, and themed food and beverage businesses. Their partnerships have focussed on creating new and innovative tourism products and packages. The challenges facing BC's agritourism industry with respect to the creation of productive partnerships are related to the limited awareness of the potential value of partnerships:

- within specific types of agricultural industries and between related but different types of industries (e.g. agritourism and/or value-added processing and tourism industry accommodation suppliers); and
- between non-similar and seemingly unrelated businesses (e.g. agritourism and/or value-added processing and equipment suppliers).

5.7.1 Recommended Strategies

➤ *Create Product Partnerships*

Through networking and workshops, the PAC should:

- Encourage the development of partnerships between agritourism and value-added processing businesses and other types of businesses at the regional level. These partnerships should occur at the individual operator or the association level;
- Bring traditional tourism businesses and farm operators together to develop mutually beneficial partnerships. The focus of such activities could be at the regional level. For example, in Ontario a "Taste of Niagara" program has been developed to encourage strategic alliances amongst food producers, the wine industry, culinary business and the cultural community in that region. Similarly, the Canadian Tourism Commission is supporting a culinary focussed partnership program amongst agricultural and tourism industry stakeholders; and
- Develop networking partnerships between researchers and agritourism organizations to provide the farmers with information on product and marketing partnerships occurring world wide. The Internet is a tool which can facilitate this networking of ideas and information. Examples of key Internet sources for product development, marketing and partnership development are presented in the Internet Navigation Guide and Bibliographic Reference sections of this document.

Case Study: Country Roads Agri-Tourism Product Club

This public-private sector program intends to bridge the gap between tourism and agriculture-based service by undertaking research and industry education that leads to the creation of new agri-tourism packages. The partnership is expected to grow to include the participation of other provinces over time. In addition, it is anticipated that there will be synergies through complementary development activities associated with the Cuisine, Wine & Culture product club and others. Founding partners include Manitoba Country Vacations Association; Manitoba Agriculture and Food; Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism; and various regional tourism associations. Currently there are 310 members in this product club (2001).

http://www.canadatourism.com/en/ctc/partner_centre/shortcutindex.cfm?info=partnering/index.htm

Case Study: Cuisine, Wine and Culture in Canada Product Club

This product club is organized by the Tastes of Niagara association - an organization which has been in operation for approximately six years. It includes members from restaurants, wineries, chefs, growers, retailers, agri-tour operators and processors, Tourism Ontario, Niagara Parks Commission, Niagara College, and the Niagara Credit Union.

The club's multi-year work plan includes: industry education; a national communication program to include other Canadian regions noted for their cuisine; and an expansion of summer and winter showcase initiatives which are introducing cuisine suppliers to the cultural sector of tourism. All of this is intended to lead to the development of new tourism packages associated with agritourism and food production.

http://www.canadatourism.com/en/ctc/partner_centre/shortcutindex.cfm?info=partnering/index.htm

Case Study: Responding to Research Gaps

Responding to growing research gaps, more family farmers and rural organizations are building their own research networks or strengthening ties with the research community to address immediate information needs. For instance, The Community Alliance For Family Farmers has developed a network for hundreds of farmers and members of the research community to exchange knowledge and experience about sustainable production techniques, marketing strategies, and financial planning.

(Farmaid1@aol.com).

5.8 MARKETING PROGRAMS

Farmers who do not have experience in marketing a service business often overlook the importance of this function. Even the best managed agritourism or value-added processing business can be unsuccessful if prospective customers are unaware that it exists or do not know what it has to offer. Beyond the development of strategic partnerships some of the critical marketing challenges facing the agritourism industry are related to the limited:

- use of available channels of distribution;
- regional or provincial tourism awareness of the sector's potential; and
- marketing abilities of many farm operators.

The PAC should encourage stronger and more effective marketing of agritourism across the province.

5.7.1 Recommended Strategies

➤ ***Develop and Promote Thematic Images of BC Farm Experiences***

The creation of a province wide image of BC agritourism experiences will help strengthen growth opportunities and provide new marketing avenues. Such an approach was successful for other tourism sectors including sportfishing, golf, guide outfitting and skiing. Specific to agritourism, the Okanagan region has been successful in increasing the awareness of its farm touring experiences. The marketing efforts have included the emphasis of the product in its regional guide and the development of a specific farm touring guide.

Tourism BC has adopted the concept of a common imaging for all of its regional and sectoral marketing. These marketing materials have consistent images and layout on their front covers. This allows for the continuation of the Super Natural image and permits individual but complementary differences to be presented at the regional and sector levels inside the document. This approach could also apply to the sector. Recently Tourism BC has incorporated agritourism landscapes into its market image mix.

Numerous examples of how other jurisdictions have been able to achieve significant growth through adherence to overall image exist. These include several examples in wine tourism destinations where the focus has gradually shifted from centring on wine production techniques to an emphasis on wine tourism experiences that combine visits to wineries and vineyards with a broader range of tourism products and services (Williams 2000).

This imaging can also incorporate the value-added processing activities. The emphasis on the opportunity to see the processing of farm produce and to purchase these products on the farm complements the farm touring experience. Therefore both agritourism and value-added processing opportunities should be included in the development of this provincial image.

➤ ***Create Marketing Materials for Reaching the Market Place***

To support the image of BC farm experiences, marketing materials should be developed for distribution to consumers. These materials should include provincial and/or regional brochures which provide visitors with specific information on farm experiences (e.g. what experiences are offered, where are they located and how can they be purchased?). The DFMA Product Guides do this in part by including descriptions about farm-based leisure activities. The Thompson Okanagan's *Tours of Abundance* brochure is an excellent regional example of this kind of initiative, while the Ministry's *Fresh from the Fields* brochure is a good provincial example. Furthering marketing initiatives of this kind serves to effectively promote the agritourism industry.

There are media avenues that individual farmer and agritourism associations can use to reach a wider marketplace. Examples include Tourism BC's HelloBC.com website, and the 1-800 Hello BC information call centre which can be used by the general consumer to obtain travel information and to book their holiday; the BC Product guide which is placed at all visitor information centres; as well as regional tourism association brochures.

Similarly, communication channels can be developed between agritourism operators and consumers via well designed websites. An example of a well-designed agritourism website is featured below.

Case Study: Okanagan Wine Festivals Website

The Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association website has a link dedicated to wine and agritourism. Under the link, (<http://www.thompsonokanagan.com/wineries/index.htm>), is a connection to wine/agritourism operator listings, and a feature on *Okanagan Wine Festivals* (<http://www.owfs.com/>).

Under its Festivals link, local orchards, farms, wineries and vineyards have collaborated to promote events, festivals, tours and tastings, a festival contest and a touring passport. Visitors can book tours, enter the festival contest, print off the touring passport or contact operators directly.

<http://www.thompsonokanagan.com/wineries/index.htm>

Table 5.8 Marketing Techniques For Getting Your Message Out – Advantages and Disadvantages

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Cost	Comments
Daily Newspaper	Wide circulation can be reread or clipped out by consumer	Non-selective audience	Medium; display ads more expensive than classified ads	Classified ads known to be well read
Weekly Newspaper	Tend to be well read; local identification	Limited readership	Medium; display ads more expensive than classified	
Travel Magazine	Can target special interest group; national or regional coverage	Long lead time	Can be costly	
Local Magazine	Can target a loyal, special interest audience	Limited audience	Medium	
Yellow Pages	Reaches people searching for a specific service or commodity	Limited to active shoppers	Medium	
Television	Wide coverage; dramatic impact	Must be done well; production costs are high	High	Local productions can be done more economically
Radio	Wide market coverage; can be fairly selective about audience; immediate	Must be bought consistently to be effective; no visual impact	Medium	
Direct Mail/ Brochures	Personalized approach to a target audience; fast	Can be considered junk or nuisance mail	High cost per mailer	Maintaining a good mailing list ensures maximum effectiveness
Product Package	A key source of advertising; delivers your message every time product is used	Restricted area on which to work	Low to medium	
Special Event Sponsorship	Can reflect good image; good media coverage if major event	Visibility dependent on size and importance of event	Highly variable	Good advance planning a must

Table 5.8 Marketing Techniques For Getting Your Message Out – Advantages and Disadvantages (continued)

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Cost	Comments
Point Of Purchase Items	Can be very effective	Must be designed well to work well	Low to medium	
Demonstrations And Sampling	An opportunity to explain product and get customer feedback	Labour intensive	Low to medium	
Novelty Items (Shopping Bags, Pens, T-shirts, etc.)	Very effective if used with other forms of advertising	Planning and producing such items can be time-consuming	Varies with novelty items	
Trade Shows/Exhibitions/Fairs	Can be restricted to target audience or aimed at general public; opportunity for personal contact	Takes much time; show must be selected carefully	Low to medium	
School Tours	Kids take home literature; bring back parents	Takes time	If charge for tours, should break even	Contests are a good way to establish mailing list
Senior's Tours	Seniors have lots of time; often buy gifts	May require special equipment to transport around farm	Low	Good exposure in community; likely to get press coverage
Newsletters	Focus on target markets	Takes time to write script	Low to medium	Provides personal touch
Billboards	Provides local coverage	Limited coverage	Medium to high	Good in heavy traffic areas
Videos	Good visual feel	Must be done professionally	High production costs	
On-site Signs/Displays	Good visual feel	Must be done professionally	Low to medium	
Internet Websites	Direct access to wide audience	Should be professional-looking, graphic, accurate, updated regularly	Low to medium, depending on server costs, website features, website designer costs,	A growing marketing medium. Can relay a "visual feel" for the operation

(Adapted from: P.G. Davidson, *On- Farm Processing: A Handbook For Producers*, 1994, pp. 46-47.)

5.9 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

While agritourism can create benefits for farm and tourism operators, it can also increase the chances of conflict between primary farming pursuits and more leisure travel activities. Planning for controversial issues and the expectations of guests can lessen the potential conflict between the working farm and the visitors. These conflicts may relate to issues of noise, smell, farming practices, and disease control. In each of these situations, it is important to establish clear communication strategies on what should be expected on-site with respect to the character of the agritourism experience. For instance, with a heightened public awareness of the potential dangers of animal disease dissemination by farm visitors, it is critical that agritourism organizations such as the PAC develop clear guidelines concerning access to farm sites by visitors. .

A current crisis, which is damaging many agricultural and rural tourism businesses is the foot and mouth disease epidemic that started in the UK and is now a challenge in continental Europe. Concern over the potential spread of the disease is causing strict quarantines of farms and major

restrictions on access to and travel within the English countryside. This includes visits by school field trips, rural tours and conferences. Farms, parks, zoos, horse racing venues, rural footpaths, rural heritage attractions, have been prohibited from visitors or are under quarantine in order to reduce the risk of any further spread of foot and mouth disease.

Case Study: Agritourism Tourism Attractions Closures

In the wake of the recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease in farms across England, tourist attractions around the country have chosen to close their doors in order to reduce the risk of any further spread of the infection.

Common land within Dartmoor National Park has been closed to public access until further notice. The area has closed its car parks in a bid to discourage walkers, and has instructed visitors to stay away from farmland within the park "until the infection is clear". Graham Taylor of the Northumberland National Park Authority said that the effect of a prolonged closure of the national park could be "very serious". Unless the outbreak was contained within the next few weeks, he said, the tourist season over Easter would be "desperately quiet". Given that in the remoter areas of Northumberland up to 30% of jobs are directly dependent on the tourist industry, the impact on the local economy would be highly detrimental.

The Cumbria tourist board has also asked visitors to stay clear of farmland, although the board was careful to stress that the Lake District was "not shut". Operations director Ian Stephen declared that "visitors need not be put off from coming. There are plenty of places where they would not come into contact with farms or livestock, particularly the towns and villages which are not out of bounds".

In London, Richmond, Bushey and Hampton Court Royal Parks, all home to large herds of deer which are susceptible to the disease, have closed their gates to the public in response to the outbreak. The National Trust has limited access to all its land supporting livestock.

Sarah Crown, Guardian Unlimited, February 27, 2001
<http://travel.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,7445,443829,00.html>

5.9.1 Recommended Strategies

The PAC should develop a clear and co-ordinated approach to dealing with crisis management challenges that may confront the agritourism industry. It should:

- review and take lessons from the tourism communication approaches used in Europe to address recent animal disease outbreaks; and
- develop policies and guidelines for agritourism partners on the most effective ways of managing public relations associated with such events.

Chapter 6

AGRITOURISM PUBLICATIONS

The following are background resources which provide useful perspectives and information associated with the future development and management of agritourism and related value-added processing activities in BC. It is divided into two components. The first section identifies print materials associated with each of the overriding strategies discussed in this report. The second section describes other agritourism publications that can be used to quickly lead farmers and managers to useful agritourism product and market development information.

6.1 STRATEGY RELATED INFORMATION SOURCES

6.1.1 Policy Information Sources

Ference Weicker and Company (1999). *Opportunities in Agri-tourism and Direct Marketing*. Available at: <http://www.fwco.com/vlibrary.html#Agriculture>.

Maude, A.J.S., D.J. van Rest (1985). The social and economic effects of farm tourism in the United Kingdom. *Agricultural Administration*. 20, 85-99.

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Pevertz, Werner (1991). Agriculture and tourism in Austria. *Tourism Recreation Research*. 16(1), 57-60.

Potthoff, H (1991). Facilities offered in agriculture for leisure time and tourism (Germany). *Tourism Recreation Research*. 16(1), 66-68.

Reid, D.G. A.M. Fuller, K.M. Haywood and J. Bryden (1993). *The Integration of Tourism Culture and Recreation in Rural Ontario: A Rural Visitation Program*. Ontario: Queen's Printer.

Tourism Chilliwack and the Chilliwack Agricultural Commission (2001). *Agritourism and Rural Recreation: A Resource Workbook for Businesses in the Chilliwack Area*. Chilliwack: Tourism Chilliwack.

6.1.2 Financial Information Sources

Davis, W.P., J.C. Turner (1992). Farm tourism and recreation in the United Kingdom. In A. Ton, A.J.M. Ali and B. Paik (Eds.). *International Conference on Agritourism Industry*, (pp. 59-76). Malaysia: Nuzul Advertising.

Embacher, Hans (1994). Marketing for agritourism in Austria: Strategy and realization in a highly developed tourist destination. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 2(1&2), 61-76.

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- Gill, G.A. (1991). The effects of 'on farm tourism' on the rural community and on farming in the United Kingdom. *Tourism Recreation Research*. 16(1), 69-71.
- Hjalager, A.M. (1996). Agricultural diversification into tourism. *Tourism Management*, 17(2), 103-111.
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- Palminkoski, U. (1991). Tourism as a form of subsidiary farm income: Finland. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 16(1), 61-63.

6.1.3 Training Information Sources

- Choy, K.A., R.C. Rounds (1992). *Community Development Strategies on the Northern Plains*. Brandon University, MB: The Rural Development Institute.
- Davis, W.P. and J.C. Turner (1992). Farm Tourism and Recreation in the United Kingdom, in Ailin Ton, Abd. Jamil Mohd Ali and Beng Paik (Eds.) *International Conference on Agrotourism Industry*. Malaysia: Nuzul Advertising, pp. 59-76.
- Embacher, Hans (1994). Marketing for Agritourism in Austria: Strategy and Realization in a Highly Developed Tourist Destination. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 2(1&2), 61-76.
- Friesen, John (1995). Farm Tourism: Inventory and Discussion on the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, *TTRA Conference*.
- Garcia-Olaya, D.L.C. (1991). Farm tourism a possible resource for the rural population (Spain). *Tourism Recreation Research*. 16(1), 83-84.
- Gill, G.A. (1991). The effects of 'On Farm Tourism', on the rural community and on farming in the United Kingdom. *Tourism Recreation Research*. 16(1), 69-71.
- Strategic Partnership (1996). *A Case Study of Agritourism in the Okanagan Similkameen*.

6.1.4 Risk Management and Liability Protection Sources

- Duckworth, Barbara (1993). Alberta highlights its tourist prospects. *The Western Producer*. April, p. 66.
- Friesen, John (1995). Farm Tourism: Inventory and Discussion on the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, *TTRA Conference*.

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1994). *On-Farm Processing: A Handbook For Producers*.

Oregon Department of Agriculture (1996) *Farm & Ranch Recreation Resource Workbook*. Salem: Oregon.

Strategic Partnership (1996). *The Case Study of Agritourism in the Okanagan Similkameen*.

6.1.5 Product and Service Quality Sources

Dernoi, L.A. (1991). Canadian country vacations: The farm and rural tourism in Canada. *Tourism Recreation Research*. 16(1), 15-20.

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Chapter 7

AGRITOURISM WEB NAVIGATION GUIDE

There is a growing body of resources in print and digital format on the topic of agritourism. Many of these resources are accessible via the World Wide Web (WWW). However, it can be quite challenging to retrieve relevant WWW information without some form of routing map. This Web Navigation Guide has been compiled to help agritourism organizations and farm operators search through the range of agritourism development and management information available on the WWW.

This section identifies three "gateway" sites which provide wide-ranging information concerning first stop shopping for agritourism related information. In addition, six "hot" websites emanating from the gateway sites are highlighted. These "hot" websites offer more specific information resources related to such issues as value-added marketing, agritourism training programs and general agricultural resources. In order to ensure that the information on agritourism is comprehensive, credible and relevant, the websites are connected to either a research institution or an agricultural organization.

7.1 THE CATALOGUE OF AGRICULTURAL AWARENESS INITIATIVES IN BC

<http://www.island.net/~awpb/aware/aa.html>

The Catalogue of Agricultural Awareness Initiatives was developed by the BC Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), under the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. It was created as part of a long term strategy to enhance awareness of agriculture and to assist in agricultural diversification. This site provides a catalogue of agricultural diversification activities around British Columbia. Descriptions of agencies, organizations and operations are given, along with contact information. The site does not provide direct links to the organizations, nor are there links to related agritourism websites. It contains a comprehensive listing of current agritourism initiatives and related activities. The site is a good start for researching BC initiatives and retrieving contact information. The Table of Contents includes:

- *Initiatives Arranged Alphabetically;*
- *Agricultural Awareness By Type of Initiative* (e.g. Direct Farm Marketing Associations, Agritourism Operations); and
- *Agricultural Awareness Initiatives By Target Audience* (e.g. Students/Youth, Consumers/General Public, Farmers/Agricultural Community, Teachers/Educators).

Each catalogue item contains: Description, Audience, Contact, Sponsor.

7.2 ALBERTA MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca>

The Alberta Ministry of Agriculture has a comprehensive website related to agritourism. The Ministry is very active in promoting agricultural diversification. The website provides practical information on agritourism product development, marketing, product offerings, and upcoming training events. The gateway into agritourism information is through the *Rural Development* portal.

Under the *Rural Development* portal are the following topics:

- Alberta Farmers' Markets Directory including information on Farmer's Markets Program Guidelines; and
- Agricultural Diversification Opportunities.

Under *Agricultural Diversification Opportunities*, are the following agritourism links:

- Agri-Tourism;
- Direct Marketing; and
- Business Strategies for Success (Entrepreneurship and business planning).

The *Direct Marketing* site contains marketing resource information and links to other Canadian and international direct marketing organizations. Examples of resource information links are: E-Commerce, Community Supported Agriculture and general marketing links.

The *Agri-Tourism* site contains many resources for agritourism operators and organizations. These include publications and newsletters (*Agri-Tourism: Explore the Opportunities*) on product development and marketing techniques. The site also contains an Agri-Tourism Directory which links a range of agritourism offerings in Alberta, such as bed and breakfast establishments, country vacations, ranch and farm stays, as well as tours. The site also provides direct links to other agritourism organizations such as *The National Tourism Database* and innovative agritourism operations such as *The Cowboy Trail* touring route.

Other Alberta Agriculture Newsletters with agritourism related articles:

- *Direct from Farm to Consumer Newsletter*
(<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/mgmt/diversification/newsvol1.html>);
- *Explore Direct Newsletter: Marketing rural Alberta products direct to consumers*
(http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/mgmt/diversification/index_news.html); and
- *NorthWest Processor Newsletter* – linking rural processors with research, technology and information, an online newsletter of Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development.

7.3 SMALL FARM CENTRE, DAVIS, CALIFORNIA

<http://danr012.ucdavis.edu/>

The Small Farm Center (SFC) is a working group formed in 1999 by the University of California, with the purpose of researching and promoting agritourism. Its site provides training materials, newsletters, web contacts, case studies and academic research information. The main portal access is *Agricultural Tourism*. Resources accessible from this website include:

- Agritourism publication, "Unique Niches: Agritourism in Britain and New England" (http://commserv.ucdavis.edu/cemarin/1_publicissues.html#niches);
- Small Farm News newsletters profile agri-tourism operations (<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/agprofiles.html>);
- Fact Sheets for Managing Agri- and Nature-Tourism Operations (<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/factsheet2.html>);
- Articles, Presentations and Reports by the Statewide Agricultural Tourism Working Group (<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/articles.html>); and
- Related national and international agricultural tourism websites at (<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/links.html>) including the categories of Agricultural Tourism and Value-Added Agriculture. There are also many useful university and agricultural organizations listed.
- SFC manages the California Agri-tourism Database at <http://calagtour.org/>. The database is organized by region, county and category of agritourism. The categories of agritourism are: accommodations, direct agricultural sales, educational experience, entertainment, recreation and miscellaneous.

7.4 OTHER USEFUL AGRITOURISM WEBSITES

7.4.1 MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY TOURISM EXTENSION TEAM

<http://tourism.ttr.msu.edu/>

The Michigan State University Extension Tourism Area of Expertise has developed programs which are designed to support agritourism and other forms of rural tourism development. The mission of The Tourism Area of Expertise (AoE) Team is to help the tourism industry improve themselves, their businesses, and their environment through an educational process that applies knowledge, demonstration and research to critical issues. The website's database contains over 250 Extension resource materials including bulletins, research reports, videos, and training programs. Nearly 100 documents are on-line in full text. The Tourism Extension Team's main page provides an index of tourism categories. From this main page access to information concerning specific to agritourism themes can be obtained. These include:

Tourism Educational Materials

www.msue.msu.edu/cgi-bin/impsrch/modtd?

The site contains a comprehensive inventory and searchable database of Extension resource materials related to tourism education. Currently the database contains over 250 Extension resource materials including bulletins, research reports, videos, and training programs. Nearly 100 documents are on-line in full text. A sample publication is Points to Consider for Operators in Setting up Agritourism found at <http://www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modtd/33831715.html>.

Promoting Tourism in Rural America (updated in 1998)

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/tourism.html>

Promoting Tourism is composed of bibliographic citations with annotations, contact lists of organizations, agencies and individuals that focus their efforts on tourism and rural development. A list of selected journals pertinent to the topic is included.

Rural and Agricultural Tourism Links

<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/RuralTRIP/websites.htm>

Active links to national and international agricultural tourism organizations and commercial operations are provided.

7.4.2 ATTRA - APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FOR RURAL AREAS

<http://attra.ncat.org/index.html>

This site provides information on value-added and direct farm marketing. The *Related Links* page has access to a wide range of national and international agricultural libraries, directories and web links.

ATTRA provides technical assistance to farmers, extension agents, market gardeners, agricultural researchers, and other agricultural professionals. Topics addressed by ATTRA can be categorised into three broad areas:

- sustainable farming production practices;
- agriculture diversification; and
- innovative agricultural marketing.

Technical assistance, publications, and resources are provided free of charge to appropriate users. For those publications not available on-line, users can call 1-800-346-9140 to receive a free printed copy (there may be a charge outside of U.S.). From the Main Page access can be gained to such sources as:

Publications (The 2001 Materials List)

The Marketing and Business Series includes:

- *Entertainment Farming & Agri-Tourism* - New farm entertainment options: crop art, mazes, theme parks, festivals, hospitality, recreation, souvenirs, children's activities, ADA regulations;
- *Farmer's Markets* - Information for organizing and selling at farmer's markets; and
- *Direct Marketing* - Importance of marketing, market research, niche marketing, value-added marketing, pricing, promotion, resources.

The Value-Added and Processing Series includes *Overview: Adding Value to Farm Products*. The publication presents the basic concept, keys to success, sources of information on business planning and regulations.

From the Main Page, other related relevant links include:

- *Agricultural Directories and Virtual Libraries*; and
- *AgWeb: The Ultimate Agriculture Research Directory*

AgWeb is a search engine that provides access to prominent agriculture databases, directories, library catalogues in North America and worldwide. Links are provided to the USDA - National Agricultural Library (electronic access to agriculture related journals, magazines, and newsletters); other North American-based gateways such as AgriWeb Canada AgriWeb Canada (<http://www.agr.ca/agriweb/agriweb.htm>), a national web-based directory of Canadian agriculture and agri-food information resources.

7.4.3 ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTE (OATI)

www.oati.com

The Ontario Agricultural Training Institute (OATI) is a non-profit organization offering training services and resources to the agriculture and related industries. It is funded through Canadian Farm Business Management Program administered by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs. Although many of their offerings are available only in Ontario, they do provide other online resources related to agritourism:

Conferences

An agritourism conference conducted by OATI was "Beyond the City Lights" (Feb. 25-27, 2001 at Niagara-on-the-Lake).

Online Training Courses

Publications:

- G. Johnson. *The Agricultural Diversification Ideas Book* (a profile of 40 operators).
- K. Nicholson-Yost. *Agri-tourism: Looking at New Horizons* (based on Stratford, Ontario "Get out of town program")

7.4.4 CANADIAN RURAL INFORMATION SERVICE

http://www.agr.ca/cris/tourism_e/webpg1a.html

The Canadian Rural Information Service (CRIS), a joint initiative of the Rural Secretariat (part of Agriculture Canada) and the Canadian Agriculture Library, is a clearinghouse for information relevant to rural Canada. The service meets the needs of a diverse group of clients including rural residents, community organizations and groups, rural businesses, rural practitioners, and government and educational institutions.

CRIS can provide clients with the following services:

- reference services in the areas of rural renewal, community development, funding sources;
- pathfinders on various topics related to rural renewal including rural tourism, entrepreneurship and opportunities for rural youth and rural education;
- customized information packages on specific queries such as rural tourism, and agricultural business development resources;
- customized bibliographic searches using online, CD-ROM or print sources;
- referrals to expert sources of information;
- news releases from the federal and provincial governments relating to rural issues; and
- document delivery.

CRIS delivers these services through the Internet, telephone, fax, or mail depending on the client's need.

7.4.5 USDA FARM DIRECT MARKETING

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/>

The Farmer Direct Marketing website is a link from the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). While much of the site information is geared toward American operations, there is useful direct farm marketing resource information.

The Farmer Direct Marketing website includes the following topic links:

- *News and Announcements*, including the regular features:
 - Monthly Newsletter;
 - Conferences and Workshops; and
 - Direct Marketing in the News.
- *Publications* under the topics of Direct Marketing Publications, Wholesale and Alternative Markets Publications. These publications are provided either in full text, PDF format or they can be ordered on-line.
- *Resources and Links*:
 - List Server and Internet Discussion Forum Information

- On-line Articles and Publications About Direct Marketing. This link provides valuable links to current research, institutions, journal articles and international events and trends. The topic categories include:
 - Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA);
 - Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN);
 - USDA - Agricultural Marketing Service - Marketing Outreach Conference 1999;
 - Analysis and Feasibility Studies;
 - Guides - Handbooks about farmers markets;
 - Guides - Handbooks about direct marketing;
 - Presentations from USDA's Agricultural Outlook Forum 1999;
 - Commentary - Miscellaneous;
 - Websites for Producers;
 - Websites for Consumers;
 - Websites for Kids; and
 - Websites About Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA's);
- Farmers Market Directory
 - Direct Marketing Resources by State
 - Links to the USDA and AMS home pages

7.4.6 THE FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION NETWORK FOR BC (FBMinet-BC)

<http://fbminet.ca/bc/commod.htm>

The Farm Business Management Internet (FBMinet-BC) website is an excellent BC information source for farm operators and agritourism providers. The Directory contains over 750 websites relevant to BC producers and other agricultural professionals. The focus of the Directory is on providing web-related information regarding farm business management plus British Columbia agricultural crops and livestock. There are 250 farm organizations under 15 commodity groupings. Under a commodity heading, operators can retrieve relevant information related to government regulations and policies regarding their crops, crop development and improvement and marketing development.

The Direct Farm Marketing link includes resources and related weblinks on market development, direct farm marketing listings, and presents farm marketing resources including business guides, factsheets, and an online tutorial to help operators build their own web page.

Appendix 1

Agritourism Market Profile Summaries

Table A-1: Distribution of BC Agritourism Products and Services By Tourism Region

CATEGORY	Cariboo Chilcotin Coast		Northern BC		Rocky Mountains		The Islands		Thompson/Okanagan		Vancouver Coast & Mountains		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Fresh Produce	1	4.8	4	30.8	2	40.0	50	59.5	6	8.5	40	62.5	103	39.9
Flowers & Plants	1	4.8	2	15.4	0	0.0	10	11.9	4	5.6	13	20.3	30	11.6
Fresh Meat	0	0.0	6	46.2	0	0.0	11	13.1	0	0.0	8	12.5	25	9.7
Poultry	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	10.7	0	0.0	4	6.3	13	5.0
Dairy & Eggs	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	12	14.3	2	2.8	6	9.4	21	8.1
Processed Foods	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	20.0	9	10.7	4	5.6	14	21.9	28	10.9
Wine	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	11	13.1	46	64.8	4	6.3	61	23.6
Rural Crafts	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	3	3.6	0	0.0	8	12.5	12	4.7
U-Pick	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	15	17.9	2	2.8	11	17.2	29	11.2
B&B	3	14.3	1	7.7	1	20.0	14	16.7	3	4.2	5	7.8	27	10.5
Cabins	12	57.1	0	0.0	1	20.0	1	1.2	4	5.6	0	0.0	18	7.0
Campsites/RV Parking	3	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.4	4	5.6	0	0.0	9	3.5
Ranch	20	95.2	1	7.7	2	40.0	0	0.0	11	15.5	2	3.1	36	14.0
Farmhouse	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.4	1	1.4	0	0.0	3	1.2
Vineyard Lodging	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.4	0	0.0	1	1.6	3	1.2
On-Site Farm/Ranch Tours	0	0.0	3	23.1	1	20.0	5	6.0	2	2.8	14	21.9	25	9.7
On-Site Winery Tours	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	3.6	16	22.5	2	3.1	21	8.1
Holiday Events	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	8.3	0	0.0	9	14.1	16	6.2
Corn Maze	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.4	0	0.0	1	1.6	3	1.2
Petting Farms	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	4.7	3	1.2
Education	0	0.0	2	15.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4	8	12.5	11	4.3
Festivals	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.2	0	0.0	3	4.7	4	1.6
Total	21	100.0	13	100.0	5	100.0	84	100.0	71	100.0	64	100.0	258	100.0

Table A-2: Summary Of Potential Long Haul Pleasure Agritourist Travel Markets

Market Indicator	Japan	U.K.	Germany
Approximate Adult Population (18 Years Or Over)	94,794,000 ¹	46,007,000 ²	65,498,000 ³
Incidence Of Long-Haul Pleasure Travellers	26.0% ¹	29.4% ²	27.6% ³
Potential Adult Long-Haul Pleasure Travellers	24,779,000 ¹	13,526,000 ²	18,077,000 ³
Potential Agritourist Travellers In The Next 5 Years	15.8%	22.9%	24.2%
Estimated Agritourist Traveller Volume	3,915,082	3,097,454	4,374,634
Incidence of Agritourist Traveller (Interest) In Canada	75.0%	74.9%	29.0%
Estimated Agritourist Traveller (Interest) Volume In Canada	2,936,312	2,319,993	1,268,644
Incidence of Agritourist Traveller (Interest & Likelihood) Visiting Canada - Next Five Years	70.8%	77.1%	84.7%
Estimated Agritourist Traveller (Interest & Likelihood) Volume To Canada - Next Five Years	2,078,909	1,788,715	1,074,541

¹ Pleasure Travel Markets To North America. Japan. Final Report. 1995. Page iii.

² Pleasure Travel Markets To North America. United Kingdom. Travel Trade Report. 1996. Page 85.

³ Pleasure Travel Markets To North America. Germany. Travel Trade Report. 1996. Page 82.